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MATTHEW TWENTY-FOUR

AND

THE REVELATION

AN ANALYSIS, LITERAL TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION OF EACH

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A FOREWORD

This book is divided into two parts. One concerns the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, and the other, the book of the Revelation. Each of these parts is divided into three portions: first, The Analysis; second, the Literal Translation; and third, the Exposition.

The Analyses concern the parts with which they are connected and each has three divisions: The Introduction, The Prophecy and The Conclusion. It will be found helpful, in reading the Expositions to keep their connected Analyses well in view.

The Literal Translations of the scriptures concerned are introduced because it is thought that some readers, who are not acquainted with the Greek, will be interested and helped in seeing the form of words which the Divine Spirit chose in writing the portions translated. It is to be understood, however, that this reproduction is not exact but only approximate, for often, especially as related to the placement of the verb, it is not possible to follow the order of words as they stand in the Greek, and, at the same time, produce intelligible English. Nevertheless, the order which is given in the original, as far as possible, has been preserved, even though the English phraseology, in not a few cases, has been strained in order to bring this to pass. The author, in making the translation, has followed the " textus receptus " of Stephens (1550), as tested and corrected by Doctor Eberhard Nestle. In addition, he has made use of such literal and paraphrastic translations as have been at his disposal. The reader may understand that this work of

translation has been submitted to the observation of those better instructed in the Greek than himself, for which reason the rendering given may be accepted as fairly representing the meaning of the original. In reading the Translation the following is to be kept in mind: supplied words have been printed in italics; alternate readings have been put in brackets; and the words in the Greek which are not needed in the English have been placed in parentheses.

The Expositions have been arranged in the form of numbered paragraphs in order that reference to them may be the easier. It is to be noted that the order of these paragraphs is not always that of their subject-matter, but of the contents of the chapters. The paragraph-themes, therefore, are not always related in thought. At the same time, since they follow the chronological development of the chapters, they are regularly progressive. It is to be observed that the scriptural quotations in the Exposition of Matthew Twenty-four, are, for the most part, from the Literal Translation, and, in the Exposition of the Revelation, from the Authorized Version. It is almost needless to say it, though it is well to do so, that the thoughts expressed in the Expositions represent the author's prophetic views, and not, in any sense, those of the China Inland Mission with which it is his privilege to serve.

Princeton, New Jersey

MATTHEW TWENTY-FOUR

ERRATA

Page 31, line 26; for Mark 12: 15–18, read Mark 16: 15–18.
Page 177, line 23; for Dan. 1: 1, read Ezra 1: 1–4.
Page 177, line 24; for Dan. 6: 1–12, read Ezra 6: 1–12.
Page 177, lines 24 & 25; for Dan. 7: 7–11, read Ezra 7: 11–26.
Page 177, lines 25 & 26; for Dan. 2: 1–5, read Neh. 2: 1–8.

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THE LITERAL TRANSLATION

THE FIRST SECTION

The Introduction

24: 1–3

This introduction (1–3) is related to the prophecy which follows it (4–41). As such, it is made up of three parts: the place where the prophecy was spoken (1); the statement which gave occasion to it (2); and the two-fold question of which it is an answer (3).

And (the) Jesus going out, went away from the temple; and his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. 2 But he answered and said to them: See you not all these *things?* Amen, I say to you, there will in no wise be left here *a* stone upon *a* stone which will not assuredly be thrown down.

3 And as he was sitting upon the mountain of the olive trees, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell to us when these *things* will be? and what will be the sign of thy coming and of the consummation of the age?

THE SECOND SECTION

The Prophecy

24: 4–41

THE FIRST HALF

24: 4–14

The prophecy as a whole (4–41) is related to the reign of the Antichrist and the persons and events which are associated with him (15). It covers, therefore, the space of seven years (Dan. 9: 24–27). The whole is divided into two equal parts, the first half representing three and a half years (4–14), and the second, another three and a half years (15–41). The middle verse reveals the self-deification of the Antichrist (15), which event is the dividing point between the "tribulation" (9; see the Translation) and the "great tribulation" (21; see the Translation).

4 And (the) Jesus answering said to them: Take heed, lest any *one* deceive you. 5 For many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ; and they will deceive many. 6 Moreover you will hear of wars, and rumors of wars; see, be not frightened; for it must needs come to pass; but not yet is the end. 7 For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and famines and earthquakes will be in *divers* places. 8 But all these *things are a* beginning of travails. 9 Then they will deliver you up into tribulation, and will kill you;

and you will be hated by all the nations on account of my name. 10 And then many will be made to fall, and they will deliver up one another, and will hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise, and will deceive many; 12 and because (the) lawlessness will have been multiplied, the love of the many will wax cold. 13 But the *one* holding out to *the* end, the same will be saved. 14 And these (the) good tidings of the kingdom will be heralded in all the inhabited earth for *a* witness to all the nations; and then will come the end.

THE SECOND HALF

24: 15–41

15 When therefore you see the abomination of the desolation, (the *one which* was spoken of through Daniel the prophet), standing in *the* holy place; the *one* reading let him consider; 16 then the *ones who are* in (the) Judea, let them flee to the mountains; 17 the *one who is* upon the housetop, let him not come down to take anything out of his house; 18 and the *one* in the field, let him not turn back to take his mantle. 19 But woe to the *ones who* are with child and to the *ones who* give suck in those days. 20 And pray you that your flight be not in winter, nor on Sabbath. 21 For then will be great tribulation, such as has not been from *the* beginning of *the* world till (the) now, no, nor in any wise will be. 22 And except those days had been shortened, not any flesh would have been saved; but on account of the elect those days will be shortened. 23 Then if any say to you, Behold, here the Christ, or Here, believe not. 24 For false christs will arise, and false prophets, and will give great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25

Behold, I have foretold *it* to you. 26 If therefore they shall say to you, Behold, he is in the wilderness, do not go out; Behold, in the secret chambers, do not believe. 27 For as the lightning comes out from *the* east, and shines as far as *the* west, so also will be the coming of the Son of (the) man. 28 Wherever the carcase may be, there the vultures will be gathered together. 29 But immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give her light, and the stars will fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 And then will appear the sign of the Son of (the) man in the heaven; and then all the tribes of the earth will lament, and they will see the Son of (the) man coming upon the clouds of the heaven, with power and great glory; 31 and he will send his angels with *a* voice of *a* great trumpet; and they will gather together his elect out of the four winds, from *the* ends of *the* heavens to *the* ends of them. 32 But from the fig tree learn the parable; when already its branch is become tender, and it puts forth the leaves, you know that the summer *is* nigh; 33 so also you, when you see all these *things*, know you that he is nigh, at *the* doors: 34 Amen, I say to you, this generation will in no wise pass away till all these *things* be accomplished. 35 The heaven and the earth will pass away; but my words will in no wise pass away.

36 But concerning that day and that hour no one knows, not even the angels of the heavens, neither the Son, but the Father only. 37 For as the days of (the) Noah, so will be also the coming of the Son of (the) man. 38 For as they were in the days, the *ones* before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, till the day Noah entered into the ark, 39 and they knew not till the flood came and took away all, so also will be the coming of the Son of (the) man. 40 Then two will be in the

field; one is taken away and one is left; 41 two grinding at the mill; one is taken away and one is left.

THE THIRD SECTION

The Conclusion

24: 42–51

The conclusion (42–51) grows out of the prophecy (4–41). It is made up of three parts: the exhortation to watch for the coming of the Son of man (42–44); the promise of blessing to those who do watch (45–47); and the warning of cursing to those who do not (48–51).

42 Watch you, therefore, because you know not *on* what day your Lord comes. 43 But this know you, that if the householder had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be dug through. 44 Because of this also be you ready; because in *an* hour you think not, the Son of (the) man comes.

45 Who then is the faithful and discreet bondman, whom his Lord has placed over his household, to give to them the food in season? 46 Blessed that bondman, whom, coming, his Lord will find so doing. 47 Amen, I say to you, that over all his possessions he will place him. 48 But if that worthless bondman shall say in his heart: My Lord delayeth, 49 and shall begin to strike the fellow bondman, *and* shall eat and shall drink with the drunken, 50 the Lord of that bondman will come in *a* day when he does not expect, and in *an* hour when he does not know; 51 and will cut him in two, and will appoint his portion with the hypocrites; there will be (the) weeping and (the) gnashing of (the) teeth.

THE EXPOSITION

1

The twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew occupies a unique place in the prophetic writings. This is the case for two reasons. In the first place, apart from the Revelation, it is the fullest presentation of the period in view to be found in the Word of God; and in the second, it is evidently the model after which all later prophecies, including the Revelation, are patterned, the mold into which they are run, the key by which they are unlocked. Not to understand the chapter, therefore, is to miss the meaning of the remainder of prophecy. To understand it, is to make possible the placing of other prophetic utterances in their rightful position and relationship, and thus to give to them their correct interpretation. The chapter then, has a paramount claim upon all students of prophecy.

2

The analysis of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew is a natural one and is easily discerned by considering its subject matter. There is at the beginning, a section, which is an introduction, wherein the Master makes a certain statement, which leads the disciples to ask a certain question in explanation of it; there is at the end, another section, which is a conclusion, wherein the Master makes certain deductions from what He has previously said and then adds to these, certain exhortations and warnings; and there lies between this introduction and conclusion

another section, which is the Master's prophetic answer to the question asked by the disciples at the beginning. The first of the above sections is from verse one to four, inclusive; the second, from verse four to forty-one, inclusive; and the third, from verse forty-two to fifty-one, inclusive. There is, in addition to these three sections, a sub-division of the second section into two portions. The first portion is from verse four to fourteen, inclusive; and the second, from verse fifteen to forty-one, inclusive; (see the Analysis and Translation).

3

The time which Christ has in view throughout the chapter, is, as we believe, the future seven-year period in which the Antichrist is to live and reign on the earth. This period had been defined and described in the Old Testament (Dan. 9: 25–27; 11: 23–45; 12: 1–13). But, in spite of the various details which had thus been given, there were many more which had not been revealed. Christ, under these circumstances, readily responded to the question which His disciples asked of Him (3). In doing this, He presented to them a large and vivid portrayal of the events which were to mark the period mentioned. These were supremely important, for they were even then impending (4–8), and, when they should take place, they were to try the faith of man as no other events ever had (21, 22).

4

In evidence of the truth that the seven-year period of the Antichrist is in view throughout the chapter, the following facts are to be noted: first, the Scripture at large

makes it clear that the space of time during which the Antichrist is to reign is one of seven years (Dan. 9: 25–27; 12:11, 12; Rev. 11: 3; 12: 6, 14); second, the chapter leads up to and ushers in the appearing of Christ, which event, according to the teaching of Scripture, is at the end of the seven-year reign of the Antichrist (14, 27, 29, 30; 2 Thess. 2:1–8; Rev. 19: 11–21); third, the time under review is one of "tribulation" (8, 9; see the Translation), and is that of the "great tribulation" (21, 22; see the Translation); which tribulations are introduced by the Antichrist, and hence, carried on by him and in his time (Rev. 12: 13–15; 13: 1–7); fourth, the period is the one in which the image is set up in the holy place (15), which event is brought to pass by the false prophet who lives in the days of the Antichrist (Rev. 13: 11–15); and lastly, it is definitely stated that the time in view is that spoken of by Daniel the prophet (15), reference to whose writings makes plain the fact that this is the period in which the Antichrist has made his covenant with the Jewish nation for the space of a "week," that is, seven years (Dan. 9: 27; 12: 11). It is to be observed that this last fact is an important one, for it indicates that the three events spoken of in the three passages — the setting up of the image (15), the breaking of the covenant (Dan. 9: 27) and the taking away of the sacrifice (Dan. 12: 11) — are synchronous; and hence, as it is plain that Daniel 9: 27 and 12: 11 are exactly in the middle of the seven years, it becomes clear that Matthew 24: 15 is.

5

The conclusion that the reign of the Antichrist is one of seven years is reached in the following manner: Daniel in his day prophesied that the time appointed to his

people, the Jews, was that of "seventy weeks" (Dan. 9:24). Sixty-nine of these were to be "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince," and to the more exact time when this One should be "cut off, but not for himself," these last words, evidently, referring to the crucifixion (Dan. 9: 25, 26). From the fact that a long space of time is expressed by the foregoing words, namely, from the going forth of the commandment to the death of Christ upon the cross, it is clear that the word translated "weeks" is not one of days, but of years; and from the added fact that the word "week," in the original, signifies a period divided into seven parts, it is evident first, that the whole period of "seventy weeks" is to be understood as representing four hundred and ninety years, and second, that the period of "seven weeks and threescore and two weeks," that is, sixty-nine weeks, is to be understood as representing four hundred and eighty-three years. There is much difference of opinion as to when the Scripture indicates that the commandment referred to was put forth. But beginning the reckoning with the year spoken of by Daniel, namely, that in which Christ was crucified (29 A.D.), and reckoning backward for the four hundred and eighty-three years mentioned, it seems quite certain that the time in the mind of the Spirit is that described by Nehemiah (2: 1–8), which was the twentieth year of Artaxerxes' reign, that is 454 B.C. Each of the sixty-nine "weeks," therefore, is to be regarded as containing seven years. Thus the remaining, or seventieth "week," is one which is exactly seven years in length (Dan. 9: 27). That this "week" is still future is manifest from the fact that the details therein given cannot possibly be fitted into the historic incidents of the past, no prince having confirmed a covenant with Israel for seven years or having

broken it after three and a half years by causing a sacrifice and oblation to cease (Dan. 9: 27). We conclude, therefore, that the whole of the seven years lies forward in time, and that its events are to be connected with the prince who is to come, who will be a desolator and will himself be desolated (Dan. 9: 26, 27), this being none other than the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2: 3–8; Rev. 19: 11–20).

6

Many commentators hold that the episode in verse fifteen — the setting up of the abomination of desolation — and the further episodes of verse sixteen through verse twenty-six — the fleeing into the mountains and the great tribulation which follows — are to be regarded as fulfilled prophecy. There is an aspect of truth in this view of the verses, for certainly the temple was desecrated by the Romans, following the taking of Jerusalem by Titus (A.D. 70), and certainly the early Christians were greatly persecuted and did flee to the mountains of Perea, finding refuge by so doing. But we question whether such experiences exhausted the prophecies here given, or, in the final sense, fulfilled them. It seems to us that this is one of the many cases in the prophetic scriptures where there is a double fulfillment, that is, that after the primary fulfillment, there is a secondary one; after the minor fulfillment, a major one. It is evident that the prophecy in Isaiah (61: 1, 2), which Christ quoted in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4: 16–21), is a case in point, there being a first and second fulfillment of the words spoken, the final utterance — "the day of vengeance of our God," (Isa. 61: 2) — indicating a still future application. It is evident also that the prophecy in Joel (2: 28–32), which Peter quoted on the day of

Pentecost (Acts 2: 17–21), is a case in point, there being a first and second fulfillment of the words spoken, the full prediction of heavenly portents (Joel 2: 30, 31) not having taken place at Pentecost, but being reserved to the last days of this present age. Cases of this kind in Scripture could largely be multiplied, a given prophecy having a double fulfilling, the first now being history, the prophecy having been fulfilled, and the second still being prophecy, the full and final content not having been fulfilled. In other words — as has often been noted — many prophecies are like a landscape, the horizon of which is bounded by a range of mountains, but which range being ascended, there is revealed a second range further on. In each case of this kind the first range represents *a* prophetic fulfillment; but the second range represents *the* prophetic fulfillment. Thus it is, as we believe, with verse fifteen of this chapter. The setting up of the Roman standards in the temple and other like defiling events were a true accomplishment of Daniel's prophecy and Christ's reiteration of it. But the prophecy and reiteration will have still another and future application, the whole being connected with the coming days of the Antichrist's reign (2 Thess. 2: 3, 4; Rev. 13: 4–15). It is this second, major and future application, which, as we proceed, we shall keep particularly in view.

7

Such interpreters of Matthew twenty-four as have the backward look, believing its prophecies were fulfilled in apostolic times, not only hold that the abomination of desolation which was to stand in the holy place (15) was the Roman standards with their heathen emblems, but also, that the Antichrist was the Roman army, or, more

particularly, the Roman Emperor whom the army represented and served. It must be admitted that there is a measure of truth in this view. The whole Roman government, including its army, was antichristian, and the God-defying and saint-persecuting Roman Emperor was indeed an antichrist. But, once more, the Roman governmental system at the time of the apostles, either at the siege of Jerusalem or during the persecutions which followed, did not exhaust or even completely fulfill the prophecies uttered by the Lord, and later, by His Spirit-inspired followers, concerning the Antichrist. In proof of this statement, let us point out the following: The chapter under review is not to be broken into fragments, but is to be regarded as a whole; and hence, when its events once begin, they are to be understood as going on uninterruptedly and rapidly to their conclusion. This means that there follows the revelation of the abomination in the holy place (15), the flight into the mountains (16–20); and there follows the flight, the great tribulation (21, 22); and there follow the tribulation, the false prophets and christs (23–26); and there follow the false teachers, the heavenly portents, including the sign of the Son of man (27–30); and there follow the sign, the coming of the Son of man and the sending of the angels for the elect (31). Now this sequence of events may rightfully be applied to the siege of Jerusalem under Titus up to the point of the persecutions and false teachers (16–26). But from thence onward, the application breaks down, there having been at that time no heavenly portents such as the evangelists describe (29; Mark 13: 24, 25, 35; Luke 21: 25, 26); the sign of the Son of man not having been given (30); the angels not having gathered the elect (31–41; Mark 13: 27; Luke 17: 34–37); and the Lord not having appeared (30; Mark 13: 26; Luke 21: 27). Moreover, the descrip-

tion of the Antichrist given by Paul, indicates a person different from any Roman Emperor, for the apostle declares that he will be sinful beyond what any such person ever was. He calls him the "man of sin," the "son of perdition," the "wicked," and the "lie" (2 Thess. 2: 3, 8, 11); he describes him as the arch-blasphemer of God and the arch-assumer of deity (2 Thess. 2: 4); and he affirms, because of his wickedness, that he will be consumed by the Lord and with the brightness of His appearing (2 Thess. 2: 8). These details look, not backward, but forward; not to a person in the past, but to one in the future. And finally, John wrote (96 A.D.) concerning the Antichrist — using almost the same language to describe him as Paul did — a full generation after Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Romans, portraying the Man of Sin, not as one who had lived or was then living, but as one who was still to come, and hence, of a different time and character than any who had previously existed (Rev. 13: 1–18; 17: 7–14). For these reasons, we are of the opinion that we have here another case of double fulfillment, Titus, as the head of the Roman government and army, being *an* antichrist, and thus a first and minor fulfillment of the Matthew prophecy; and the future Man of Sin being *the* Antichrist, and thus the second and major fulfillment of the same.

8

We conclude, in view of the foregoing considerations, that the seven-year period of the Antichrist begins at verse four of the chapter and ends at verse forty-one; and hence — the self-deification of the Antichrist being portrayed by verse fifteen (Dan. 11: 36–39; 2 Thess. 2: 3, 4; Rev. 13: 4–15) — that the events which are described

by verses four to fourteen occur in the first three and a half years and are in preparation for the Antichrist's self-deification, and those described by verses fifteen to forty-one occur in the second three and a half years and are in consequence of that self-deification. We further conclude, as a result, that the events portrayed in verses four to fourteen do not refer to the long period of time known to us as the Christian era. They do this so far as principle is concerned, this being manifested by the fact that the whole past age has been characterized by false christs, wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes (5–7). But this view of the passage is obtained by a process of secondary application rather than one of primary interpretation, for, as we have seen, an exact placing of verses four to fourteen locates them within the first half of the seven-year period, as a similar exact placing of verses fifteen to forty-one locates them within the last half of the same period.

9

A confirmation of the above reasoning is secured by noticing carefully the question which the disciples asked the Lord, and, additionally, the fact that the Master, all through His discourse, was answering the enquiry which had been made of Him. The question was this: "Tell to us when these *things* will be? and what will be the sign of thy coming and of the consummation of the age?" (3). And the prophetic answer keeps closely and accurately to the details of the enquiry thus expressed. In other words, Christ did not make the disciples' question, as many persons think, the occasion for presenting a general statement concerning prophetic truth. His followers had asked when the temple would be thrown down, and what

would be the sign of both His coming and the finishing of the age; and His reply had in view these two enquiries, and nothing besides. We must be careful, therefore, not to read into Christ's discourse, especially from a church-period standpoint, what was not intended to be and is not there.

10

It is interesting to note, in addition to the above, that Christ's reply is so framed as to make the first part of it deal with the "When?" and the second part with the "What?" of the disciples' question; "When shall these things be?" and "What will be the sign?" The answer to the "When?" is found in the first portion of the prophetic statement, from verse four to fourteen, inclusive; and the answer to the "What?" is found in the second portion, from verse fifteen to forty-one, inclusive. But an important statement is to be added to this. The whole of the double enquiry was connected with the "end of the world" [or, age]. The answer, therefore, does not pertain to general dispensational periods. It has to do, as has been said, with one period only, namely, the end of the age, which is the seven year reign of the Antichrist. This statement is seen to be true, first, from the question asked, secondly, from the details of the description given; and thirdly and particularly, from the fact that Christ either implies or states, some ten times over, that he is speaking exclusively of end-time conditions (13, 14, 15, 21, 27, 29, 30, 33, 34, 36–41).

11

Reference has been made in the preceding paragraphs to the fact that the seven-year end-time was uppermost in the minds both of the disciples and the Lord, and

hence, that the events of this period constitute the theme of the chapter's prophecy. This being kept in view, it is important to observe that the Greek words for "end" used by the disciples and Christ are not the same, and that the difference between them is not one of chance but design. When the disciples asked their question in verse three, "What?" — as it is in the Authorized Version — "shall be the end of the world?" [or, age], they used for the word "end" the word *sunteleia*. But when the Master spoke in verses six, thirteen and fourteen, saying, "But the end is not yet," "But he that shall endure unto the end," and "Then shall the end come," He used for the word "end" the word *telos*. Now it is true, that each of the words referred to means end. But the first one (*sunteleia*), signifies a general and approximate end, and the second one (*telos*), a particular and exact one. In other words, *sunteleia* implies a combination of parts which make toward one end, and which implies, therefore, a more or less lengthened period of time in which a number of events may occur; but *telos* signifies an end which has been reached, and which implies, therefore, a moment of time, sharply defined, and marked off, frequently, by a single event. The first of these words presents the idea of a time process which is a consummation (see the Revised Version margin); while the second presents the thought that the process has been brought to a conclusion and the complete end has come.

12

It is to be understood from the above that the disciples desired — as evidenced by their question — to be informed concerning the various events of the more or less lengthened *sunteleia* end-time; and it is to be noted that the

Lord responded to this desire — as evidenced by His reply — in a large and detailed manner. But it is to be observed, when the Master spoke of the "end" in the three several verses where the word occurs (6, 13, 14), that His thought passed from the general *sunteleia* end to the exact *telos* one, that is, to the full end of the end-time, which would be the conclusion of the age and would be brought to pass by His appearing. As an incidental thought to the foregoing, it is instructive to observe that the Lord used in Matt. 28: 20, in the phrase, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" [or, age], not the word *telos* for end but *sunteleia*, thus indicating — as He did also in Matt. 24: 14 — that the gospel would be preached by the disciples in the end-time period of seven years and that His presence would be their strength and comfort throughout the course of its serious and trying events.

13

We may now understand what Christ meant when He said, in verse six, "But not yet is the end." He had been speaking of the things which would occur in the longer period, namely, in the first three and a half years of the *sunteleia* end. But following this, His thought went forward to the *telos* end — for this is the word He used — which end would only be reached when all of the intermediate prophesied events of the *sunteleia* end had been fulfilled, which meant that the *telos* end was somewhat removed from those events. We may now also understand that the Lord said what He did — "But not yet is the end" — in order to correct what He knew would be a false conclusion on the part of his hearers. As it has been pointed out, He had been telling the

apostles that the first three and a half years of the Antichrist's reign would bring them into tribulation (9; see the Translation), and He anticipated that the temptation would be upon them to conclude that their sufferings would immediately thereafter be brought to a close. But this was not to be the case. So in loving warning of their being further tested by suffering. He declared, "But not yet is the end" (6) that is, the full end; whereupon He added, by the way of a still further gracious explanation concerning this earlier period, "All these *things are a* beginning of travails" (8).

14

It is evident from what has been said that Christ intended to imply in verses six and eight that a second period of another three and a half years lay before the disciples; that this would bring a greater tribulation (21, 22); and that it would only be at the end of these later years — when the gospel had been preached to all of the nations, when the sign of the Son of man had been seen, when the Son of man Himself had appeared, and when the full end had thus been reached — that they would be delivered from persecution and suffering (14, 22, 29, 30). And this throws light upon the Lord's remark in verse thirteen, "But the one holding out to *the* end" (*telos*), that is, through the seven years to their full conclusion, "the same will be saved" [or, delivered], a statement which indicates that such an one would not only be preserved spiritually, but also would be delivered physically, that is, from the persecution of the Antichrist, this to be brought to pass by the appearing and power of Christ, the destroyer's Destroyer (Dan. 9: 27; 2 Thess. 2: 7, 8; Rev. 19: 11–20). In connection with this last remark

we would call attention to the fact that the thought of overcoming as a result of endurance, and the deliverance to which this leads, is one which runs, in the Revelation, throughout the letters to the seven churches (Rev. 2: 7, 11, 17, 26; 3: 5, 12, 21; 21: 7). This indicates that Matthew twenty-four and the letters to the seven churches are not only intimately connected, but also are identical, both as to the time and experience which are therein described.

15

Matthew twenty-four is to be considered in connection with Mark thirteen, Luke seventeen and Luke twenty-one, and it seems quite certain that the four scriptures, from a general standpoint, are concurrent with one another. But certain distinctions between the four passages are to be observed. It appears that the addresses of Matthew twenty-four, Mark thirteen and Luke seventeen are mostly the same, the only difference being in the fact that the record of Matthew is full and complete, and the records of Mark and Luke are abridged, and, in this sense, incomplete. It appears also, that the addresses in Luke seventeen and twenty-one, while the same in substance as the others, differ from them in several particulars, namely, in time, place and manner, and, partly in audience. A careful reading of the passages indicates that the Lord's addresses reported by Luke were given first in time, in the temple court, openly, and to a general company; the address of the seventeenth chapter to the Pharisees (Luke 17: 20); and that of the twenty-first to the apostles and disciples (Luke 21: 1–7, 37); but that the address reported by Matthew and Mark was given later, on the Mount of Olives, privately and to a select number of apostles (Matt. 24: 1–3; Mark 13: 1–4). In other words, what

Christ had first taught to the Pharisees, apostles and disciples in general terms, He afterwards repeated to a smaller company — it may be only Peter, James, John and Andrew (Mark 13: 3) — in more specific and detailed terms. The natural occasion of these events seems to have been this. Christ, at this time of His earthly ministry, spent His days in Jerusalem and chiefly in the temple court. He spent His evenings and nights on the Mount of Olives. What, therefore, the apostles heard Him say in the busy day and did not understand, they asked Him about in the quiet of the evening, as they sat together under the shadow and protection of the great trees on Mount Olivet. At such times, Christ both repeated and expounded His day-time discourses.

16

The above explains what not a few students have noticed, that the prophetic reach of the Matthew and Mark passages appears to be greater than that of the twenty-first of Luke passage, the latter seeming to find its objective in the first destruction of Jerusalem, and the former finding their objective in the second advent. Nevertheless, careful observation discloses the fact that this distinction is more apparent than real, for all of the passages cover the days of the Antichrist and each one ends at the coming of the Son of man (Matt. 24: 15, 30; Mark 13: 14, 26; Luke 21: 25–27). At the same time, it is a fact that the view of the whole period as presented by Matthew and Mark is more clearly and distinctly given than it is as presented by Luke. We thus conclude that there is here brought before us one of the many cases in Scripture where we are shown that God reveals His most intimate truths — the larger view being granted only to the dis-

ciples on the Mount — to those who are most intimately connected with Him (Dan. 12: 4, 9, 10; Matt. 17: 1, 2; Rev. 1: 3, 11).

17

One of the facts which arises out of the above scriptural presentation is this, that the description of the destruction of Jerusalem given in Luke (21: 20–24), has both a nearer and farther aspect. The shorter view which is found there shows us Jerusalem surrounded by the armies of the Roman nation under Titus (in A.D. 70) and finally overthrown by them. But the longer one shows us Jerusalem rebuilt — which rebuilding is now going on — surrounded by the armies of all the nations and again overthrown, this second time in the last days, whenever these will be (Zech. 14: 1–3). Thus it appears that the first destruction was meant to be a prefigurement of the second — this being another case of double fulfillment — so that the Lord in the temple discourse, as recorded by Luke in chapter twenty-one, was prophesying concerning both the one destruction and the other. It is to be kept in mind then, that the first application of the prophecy does not displace the second.

18

It is here that the Olivet discourse, as recorded by Matthew and Mark, explains the temple discourse, as recorded by Luke in chapter twenty-one; for what is near at hand in the latter account becomes farther away in the former one. We come to see thus that Jerusalem's history is not only in the past but also in the future, and that her cup of woe must again be filled and drunk to the dregs. To confirm this thought, it is only necessary to

point out the fact that the passage in Luke concerning Jerusalem gives many of the same details as are given in Matthew and Mark, which places finally, all of the prophecies in the days of the Antichrist (Matt. 24: 15–30; Mark 13: 14–26; Luke 21: 20–27).

19

There is a striking statement in Luke 21: 24 which throws a bright and even glaring light on Jerusalem's future. It reads as follows: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Here is a revelation which no man, either Jew or Gentile, either peasant or prince, may bring to naught, and which fixes Jerusalem's present and future political state as one of humiliation, till the end of the age. The world war has done much for the Holy City; and Zionism will accomplish much more. But the present British mandate over Palestine, kindly as it is, implies that the land is still under Gentile rule; and Zionism, in spite of all its longings and strivings, will never be able to break this or a similar Gentile yoke. Moreover, the last great ruler of this age over Israel, Antichrist, will — as may be proved — be a Gentile, so that Gentile dominion will continue until the end of the present dispensation. It is to be observed then, that Israel's national hope, however little she realizes it, is bound up, not in any Gentile, but in a Jew, even in Jesus Christ; for He alone can and will bring the Gentile domination over Jerusalem to an end. This He will do by His coming in power and great glory (Zech. 14: 1–9).

20

The foregoing makes it clear that there is a national aspect about the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew —

the same is found also in Mark thirteen, Luke seventeen and Luke twenty-one — its whole movement being toward the coming of Israel's King and the establishment of the Jewish kingdom. That this is so becomes doubly clear as one reads on in Matthew, into and through the twenty-fifth chapter, for there the King is seen seated upon His throne (25: 3, 34), which is Jewish (Luke 1: 31–33), and there He brings the Jewish question into final and decisive review, the King's " brethren " in the passage being Christian Jews (25: 34–45). It is at this time that Christ judges the Gentile nations according to their treatment of and relationship with the Jews (25: 34–46), and He then, as a result of judgment, sets up a Jewish kingdom, of which Solomon's with all its extent and glory, was but a faint prototype (Ps. 2: 1–12; 46: 1–11; 67: 1–7; 72: 1–19; Isa. 12: 1–6; 32: 1, 2, 15–20; 35: 1–10; Dan. 2: 31–35, 44, 45; Rev. 20: 1–6). Until these events take place, Jerusalem, as Christ said, must lie under Gentile dominion, and whatever her prosperity, must remain a vassal state.

21

In considering the subject matter of the prophetic portion of the chapter (4–41), the most impressive thing to note is that Christ gives a large place in His discourse to the apostasy which was then and is still to come. He refers to this both in the earlier and later part of His prophecy, in that portion which is related to the first three and a half years (4, 5, 11, 12) and also in that which is related to the second (23–26). Indeed, He began His address with the thought of an approaching spiritual declension, putting thus the emphasis of precedence upon it (4, 5). Christ evidently meant by this to teach that the main characteristic of the days of the Antichrist, and

hence, the main temptations and dangers of the time to the disciples were to be, not of a physical nature, but of a spiritual. And when it is remembered how fearful the physical part is to be (9, 15–22) one may the more readily understand the terribleness of the spiritual.

22

In addition to this, the prophecy shows that the peril of false teaching was steadily to increase to the end of the age, as also, a yieldingness to it (10, 11, 23, 24). In the first three and a half years, evidently, there is a general letting down of the standard of truth and the result is that many saints are thus deceived (4, 5, 11). But in the second three and a half years, the Antichrist substitutes himself for the Christ, his emissaries go abroad demanding by great signs and wonders that men shall worship him, and even the very elect are nigh unto giving up their faith in Christ (15, 23, 24; Rev. 13: 11–15). There is thus produced, the great apostasy, which has already begun and is going on apace, but which will find its climax in the seven years, and particularly, in the last three and a half years, that is, at the full end of the age (2 Thess. 2: 1–11; 2 Tim. 3: 1–7, 13; 4:1–4; 2 Pet. 2: 1–3).

23

Christ laid His second emphasis, judging from the space given to the subject in His prophetic discourse, upon the physical trial which was and is to come. Here again He referred to the matter both in the first and second portions of His prophecy, that is, as related to the first three and a half years (9) and also to the second (16–24). But here again, there is a difference between the first experience

described and the second. In the earlier, the persecution and suffering come as an indirect result of the general conditions prevailing, it being a time of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes and social and family upheaval (7–10); while in the later, these follow as a direct consequence of Antichrist's self-deification and his hatred of God and of all who name themselves by the name of Christ (15–22). It follows that here also there is a steady increase, from the earlier time to the later, since, in the experience of peril, the venom of Satan, through his willing tool, the Antichrist, is more and more intensified and felt the nearer men come to the end of the age (Rev. 12: 9–12; 13: 4–7). It thus becomes evident that this later time is to produce persecution and suffering such as the world has never yet known; not during the ten great persecutions of the apostolic and post-apostolic times; nor during the Reformation sufferings; nor during the Spanish inquisitions; nor during the various Armenian massacres; for Christ's prophecy distinctly says, "For then will be great tribulation, such as has not been from *the* beginning of *the* world till now, no nor in any wise will be" (21); and it adds, "And except those days had been shortened, not any flesh would have been saved: but on account of the elect those days will be shortened" (22).

24

It is to be observed that the whole of the seven years of the Antichrist is a period of tribulation, for the same Greek word (*thlipsis*) is used to describe both the first and second half of that time (9, 21; see the Translation). But it is to be further observed that the Lord puts before this word as it is used in the second half period, the adjective "great" (*megalē*), which indicates that it is

only at the end of the second three and a half years that the climax of persecution is reached and the sufferings of the saints are terminated. As before remarked, deliverance from persecution is brought to pass by the personal appearing of Christ, who destroys the Antichrist and thus rescues those who are being afflicted by him (24–27; 2 Thess. 1: 5–10; 2: 3–10; Rev. 19: 11–21).

25

The fourteenth verse stands in the midst of the prophecyings of our Lord as a bright light in a deep darkness. All about this verse, according to the Lord's discourse, there is the gloom of falsehood (4, 5), hatred (10), apostasy (11, 12), persecution (19, 21), fear (15–20; Luke 21: 25, 26) and sudden and terrible death (9, 21, 22). But Christ declared, in spite of all these things, that the saints would endure and overcome, proclaiming the good tidings of the kingdom throughout the inhabited earth, for a testimony to all the nations (14). Persecuted and scattered abroad they would be, as afterwards took place (Acts 8: 1) and will yet again take place (Rev. 12: 13, 14; 13: 5–7). But as it was in the past so it will be in the future, " Those that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word " (Acts 8: 4). This last, world-wide, quick and intensive proclamation of the gospel during the seven years, is undoubtedly, that to which Christ referred, in a primary sense, when He gave the great commission, as recorded in Matt. 28: 19, 20 and Mark 12: 15–18. For, while it is true that this commission is applicable in principle to the saints of all time, the promise of Matt. 28: 20, be it remembered, is consummated in the *sunteleia* end, that is, in the seven-year period of the Antichrist's reign, so that the commandment is likewise a

prophecy, and as such, it looks in the direction of the last days, to the consummation of the present age.

26

The foregoing being the case, we may state that the promises concerning the signs which are mentioned in Mark's version of the commission (Mark 16: 17, 18), have to do, not so much with present time and experience, as with future, and that they are then for the particular purpose — as took place in Moses' days (Exod. 7: 10–12, 19–22; 2 Tim. 3: 8) — of matching and overmatching the great signs and wonders of the false prophets of the Antichrist (24; 2 Thess. 2: 8–13; Rev. 11: 3–6; 13: 10–15). This is touchingly suggestive of the fact that God's grace abounds to the very end of the age and in its most apostate state, His proclamation of mercy, attested by manifestations of divine power, being made to men as long as there is hope of there being open minds and hearts to receive it (Rev. 3: 20; 14: 6, 7). Growing out of these truths there is presented to us the blessed fact that there will be even in these trying times, those who, like Paul, will not be moved, neither will count their lives dear unto themselves, so that they may finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20: 24; Rev. 14: 1–5). This indeed is a very bright light in the midst of a great and rapidly deepening darkness.

27

It is often said that the gospel referred to in verse fourteen, being the "gospel of the kingdom," is not the gospel of the grace of God. But are there many gospels? or is

there more even than one gospel? Paul said not, and he breathed an anathema upon any person who should preach any other than the one gospel (Gal. 1: 6–9). Indeed, in the nature of the case, there can be but one gospel, for the gospel is good tidings, and such can only come from a proclamation of the forgiveness of sins through Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Whether then, it is in the Old Testament or New, in the Gospels or Epistles, salvation is of grace and the gospel which proclaims this salvation is the gospel of grace. This one gospel, however, is called in Scripture by different names, according to the times in which it is preached, the particular objective which is set before it and the special emphasis which circumstance lays upon it. Thus we have the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 4: 23), the gospel of the kingdom of God (Mark 1: 4), the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20: 24), the gospel of God (Rom. 15: 16), the glorious gospel of the blessed God (1 Tim. 1: 11), the gospel of His Son (Rom. 1: 9), the gospel of Christ (Rom. 15: 19), the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 1: 1), the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1: 8), the gospel of peace (Eph. 6: 15), the gospel of the circumcision and uncircumcision (Gal. 2: 7) and the everlasting gospel (Rev. 14: 6). And thus also, in confirmation of the fact that the gospel of the kingdom is also the gospel of grace, we have the example of Paul who preached the gospel of grace (Acts 20: 24) and also preached the gospel of the kingdom (Acts 20: 25; 28: 23, 30, 31). It is clear then, that these persons — as recorded in verse fourteen — who preach the "gospel of the kingdom" are also preaching the gospel of the grace of God, this and nothing besides. The reason why this gospel of grace is here called the gospel of the kingdom is this: it is, as it was when Christ first came, because it will be necessary in the last days, to put a kingdom emphasis upon the gospel,

in order that men may be prepared to meet the coming King and so be made spiritually ready to enter the coming kingdom.

28

Nothing is clearer in the prophetic discourse of the Lord than the fact that He took it for granted, throughout, that the apostles and disciples whom He addressed would be in the midst of, and thus see and experience all of the things which He was foretelling. But in spite of clearness, this fact is not generally realized or accepted as truth. On the contrary, the opinion is held that all who had then named the name of Christ would have no part in the untoward events of the time of the Antichrist if these had then occurred, but would have been lifted up and out of tribulation-evil before such might have come. It seems necessary, therefore, to review the statements of the Lord as given in the chapter and thus draw attention to the actual words which He used. In doing this, in order to make the matter the more emphatic, we print the personal pronouns and certain other words in italics: "And Jesus answering said to them: Take heed, lest any one deceive *you*" (4); "Moreover *you* will hear of wars, and rumors of wars; see, be not frightened; for it must needs come to pass" (6); "Then they will deliver *you* up into tribulation, and will kill *you;* and *you* will be hated by all the nations on account of my name" (9); "When therefore *you* see the abomination of the desolation, (the one which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet), standing in the holy place; the *one reading* let *him* consider" (15); "And pray *you* that your flight be not in winter, nor on Sabbath" (20); "Then if any say to *you:* Behold, here the Christ, or, Here, believe not" (23); "Behold, I have foretold it to *you*" (25); "If there-

fore they shall say to *you:* Behold, he is in the wilderness, do not go out; Behold, in the secret chambers, do not believe" (26); "So also *you,* when *you* see all these things, know *you* that he is nigh, at the doors" (33); "Amen, I say to *you,* this generation will in no wise pass away till all these things be accomplished" (34). Here, by reason of the language used, we must conclude that Christ sought plainly to set forth the solemn truth that the apostles and early disciples were to live in the seven years of the Antichrist (34); that they were to see the abomination of desolation which was to be set up by the false prophet (2 Thess. 3: 3, 4; Rev. 13: 11–15) standing in the holy place (15); that they were to be subject to the spiritual and physical temptations of those times (4, 5, 11, 12, 23–25); that they were to be hated and persecuted, being brought into tribulation (9, 10, 16–22); that many of them would suffer martyrdom for the name's sake (9, 22); that they were called upon, in spite of all suffering, to endure to the full end, with the promise, if they did so, of being delivered (13); that they were to watch the signs and know by these when the Son of man would be near at hand (33; Luke 21: 27–31); and finally, that their hope would be, in the midst of their many and great distresses, that Christ would personally, suddenly and gloriously return to and for them (26, 27, 29, 30–41; Luke 21: 25–28).

29

It is to be observed now, that Christ never withdrew the above forewarning words, either before or after Pentecost. We must conclude, therefore, that the early disciples must have expected and looked for the times and conditions of which He had spoken. And there is no reason to suppose that they were in the least surprised

when persecution began and many of their number were called upon to attest their love for Christ by their devotion in suffering and death. Indeed, as we learn from the patristic writings, the disciples were so prepared for this order of things by the Lord's prophecy that many of them were led to the conclusion that the Roman Emperor was the Antichrist, that his persecution was the great tribulation, and, therefore, that the Lord would speedily appear. In other words, there is every reason to believe that the apostles and early disciples had fully understood, when Christ had spoken concerning the last evil days, that He had definitely intended to convey to them the thought that the things which He had foretold would come in their time and that they themselves would be involved in the terribleness of their destroying power (Acts 4: 23–30; 5: 22–33, 41; 14: 22; 20: 24; 21: 13). This conclusion explains, as none other does, the attitude of the apostles concerning suffering. They reckoned it an honor to be counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's name (Acts 5: 41); Peter exhorted the disciples to rejoice when they were made partakers of Christ's sufferings (1 Pet. 4: 12, 13); and Paul made it distinctly plain that all who would live godly should suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3: 12), and also, that it was through much tribulation that the saints would enter the kingdom (Acts 14: 22). The order of events in their minds was, first, the suffering, and then the kingdom. And for the kingdom's sake, they willingly endured the suffering.

30

There is a verse in Luke's Gospel which seems to contradict all that has been said above, to which, in consequence, we must give our special attention. And in order that its words may be freshly before us, we shall

quote it in full. As we do this, we give to it its literal translation: "Watch [or, keep awake] you therefore in every season, praying that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these *things* being about to come to pass, and to stand in presence of the Son of man" (Luke 21: 36). Here the Lord appears to indicate that watchfulness and prayer would bring to pass a complete deliverance from the days of the Antichrist and thus from his persecutions, with the presumption — as many teach — that this would be accomplished, before the days of tribulation should come, by Christ's returning and bringing His saints to Himself. But does the verse mean this? We do not think that it does, for the following reasons: First, the verses immediately preceding positively declare that the persons whom He was addressing would live in the time of the Antichrist and would feel the effect of his persecuting hatred (Luke 21: 12–35). Second, the verse does not tell the apostles and disciples to watch and pray that they may escape *away from* the things which were to come to pass, but rather *out of* them, for the verb is not *apopheugō,* to escape away-from, but *ek-pheugō,* to escape out-of-the-midst-of, the preposition *ek* of the verb implying that the disciples would be living in the times of the evils in mind and that the evils themselves would be round about and pressing upon them (Luke 21: 36; Greek). Third, the possible escaping of the disciples referred to cannot mean a physical one, for the preceding verses distinctly affirm, in spite of watching and praying, that many saints would be both afflicted and killed (Luke 21: 12, 16, 17, 23, 24); and hence, they must mean a spiritual one, such as would, in the midst of persecution and sufferings, keep their faith firm and their testimony true (Matt. 24: 13; Mark 13: 11–13; Luke 21: 13–19). And finally, the word "stand" (*histēmi*), as interpreted

by its use in Scripture, generally represents, not a physical attitude, but a spiritual one, the many times it is used in the Epistles conveying the thought of spiritual overcoming and victory (Rom. 14: 4; 1 Cor. 7: 37; 2 Cor. 1: 24; Eph. 6: 11, 13, 14; Col. 4: 12; 1 Pet. 5: 12; Jude 24). Instead, therefore, of the verse contradicting the previous teaching, it strongly confirms it, for it sets forth the fact that the apostles and first disciples were to live face to face with the Antichrist; that they were to be in the midst of his persecutions; that they were to be sorely tried and almost overwhelmed by his evil devices; that there would be constant need of their watching and praying if spiritual deliverance was to be obtained; and finally, that such deliverances would be given, and thus, that they would be counted worthy to stand blameless in the holy presence of the Son of man, both in life and at His coming.

31

In addition to the truth that Christ taught that the apostles and early disciples would live in the days of the Antichrist and be in the midst of his persecutions, it is clear that He set forth the fact that these days and experiences were then impending. We judge thus for the following reasons: Christ declared, in the first place, that though heaven and earth would pass away, His words would not pass away (35). He declared, in the second place, that that generation would not pass till all the things which He had foretold had been accomplished (34). He declared, in the third place, that those whom He was addressing would see the Antichrist and hence, would be living within the seven years of his reign (15). He declared, in the fourth place, that they would be brought into "tribulation" (9; see the Translation), and also, into

"the great tribulation" (15–22; see the Translation), this implying that they were to live both in the first three and a half years and in the second. He declared, in the fifth place, that they would see both the sign of the Son of man and the Son of man Himself (26–30). And lastly, He commanded them to watch for His return as for an event which would take place in their time, and both speedily and unexpectedly (42–44). All this indicates that the various episodes which Christ had described, these being within the lifetime of His hearers, were regarded as at hand and impending.

32

This nearness of last events had been the message of John the Baptist when he began his ministry (Matt. 3: 1, 2). It had been that of Christ as He commenced His teachings in Galilee (Mark 1: 14, 15). It had been that of the apostles as they went forth into their service of preaching and healing (Matt. 10: 5–7). And now, evidently, it was the teaching of the Lord as He foretold the things which were to come to pass. In the view of Christ then, the dark clouds of the rule of the Antichrist were already spreading over the sky, and the storm of his God-defying and saint-persecuting wickedness was about to break upon the earth. This, therefore, was the reason why the Lord sought to prepare His devoted followers for the holocaust of evil which was to be. It was the love that loved His own unto the end which prompted what otherwise would almost seem like too great frankness. For Christ plainly foresaw the false christs and the Antichrist, the disciples' suffering and despair, and also the strong temptation which would be upon them to conclude, in the midst of persecutions, that their absent Lord

had forgotten, that He did not care and that there was little use in following Him if they were to be left alone and unprotected in such fire and flood as this; and so, not in too great frankness but in infinite tenderness, He lifted the veil before advancing time and event and bade His followers to behold, to beware and to endure unto the end (6–13). This explains how it was, a little later, that these same apostles and disciples faced prisons, stonings, stocks, crosses and headsmen's blocks and axes with faith in God in their hearts and praise to Him upon their lips (Acts 5: 41; 7: 54–60; 20: 23–24; 21: 13). They remembered that the time of suffering had been foretold. Thus, being forewarned, they found themselves forearmed.

33

It is important in considering the prophetic portion of Matthew twenty-four, to endeavor to ascertain what its teaching is concerning the time of Christ's return. And in doing this, we need to guard against a common and serious error, namely, the conviction that because we cannot know *everything* about the time, it follows that we cannot know *anything* about it. It is indeed true that no man may know the "day and hour," the Father not having revealed this to the angels, nor even to the Son (36; Mark 13: 32). But it is not true that the saints may not know the age, for it is the present one (Gal. 1: 4; 2 Thess. 2: 1–8; 1 John 2: 18; Rev. 20: 1–6); nor the part of the age, for it is the last portion of it (Matt. 13: 39, 40, 49, Greek; 28: 20, Greek; 2 Tim. 3: 1; 2 Pet. 3: 3; Jude 18); nor possibly, at last, the year, for there seems reason to believe that the coming will be in or immediately after the seventh year of the Antichrist (Dan. 9: 27; 2 Thess. 2: 8; Rev. 19: 1–20). The saints

then, will see the signs, perceive their import and come to understand their meaning, both in respect to the general time of Christ's advent and the redemption of the elect which it will bring to pass (15, 23–33; Mark 13: 14, 21–30; Luke 21: 25–32). Daniel, speaking of this end-time period had said, that the wise should understand (Dan. 12: 9, 10); and the Lord, both in His address in the temple court (Luke 21: 28–31) and here on Olivet's brow (32, 33; Mark 13: 28, 29), makes it plain, using both statement and parable to this end, that His followers would recognize the period when He should be nigh, even at the doors (33). In other words, we may conclude that the experience of the later saints as related to the second advent will be similar to that of the earlier ones as related to the first, namely, that while they may not be permitted to know the time of the coming exactly, they may come to know it approximately. And Christ's prophetic address in this chapter leads a long way to this approximation. For certain facts in His discourse, in this respect, stand forth with great clearness and these are a sure guide to us in our seeking to understand somewhat about the time.

34

Before, however, we consider the facts just referred to, let us look at the Lord's words in reference to approximate knowledge as given in Luke's Gospel, so that we may have the warrant of these before us. We give them in their literal form: "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity, roaring of *the* sea and rolling waves, men fainting from fear and expectation of that which is coming on the habitable earth; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken; and then they will see the Son of man coming

in *a* cloud with power and great glory. When these *things* are beginning to occur, raise yourselves and lift your heads, because your deliverance draws near. And he spoke a parable to them; Behold the fig tree and all the trees; when they sprout already, looking of yourselves, you know that already the summer is near. So also you, when you see these *things* coming to pass, know that the kingdom of God is near" (Luke 21: 25–31). And let us look at similar words given in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew's Gospel: "But from the fig tree learn the parable; when already its branch is become tender, and it puts forth the leaves, you know that the summer *is* nigh; so also you, when you see all these *things*, know you that he is nigh, at *the* doors" (32, 33). Manifestly then, as Daniel said, the wise will understand. By the signs described, which were ultimately to be realized, the Lord taught that the saints were to have the privilege of knowing, increasingly and more and more exactly, when their redemption was drawing nigh and Christ was about to appear.

35

Examining now, that part of Christ's prophetic address which refers to the time of the advent, the following truths seem to be made clear: First, there is no intimation in it that there was to be an advent and consequent translation and resurrection previous to the seven years of the Antichrist, which silence of statement is presumptive evidence of the fact that the Lord intended that the apostles and disciples should understand that His coming would occur either within or after the seven-year period and that these events of translation and resurrection would then take place. Second, Christ plainly taught his hearers that they were to see the abomination of desolation standing in the

holy place (15), which event occurs, as we have seen, in the middle of the prophetic "week" (Dan. 9: 27), that is, at the end of the first three and a half years of the Antichrist's reign; which makes it clear that the disciples were to continue on earth through those years, and hence, that Christ would not come until after that time had run out its course. Third, the Lord declared that the great tribulation would follow the self-deification of the Antichrist (15) and would continue through the second three and a half years of his reign (16–22), and also, that it would be "immediately after the tribulation of those days" that the disciples would see the sign of the Son of man (29, 30); all of which makes it plain — the sign preceding the coming — that the advent was not to take place until the tribulation had been brought to a conclusion, that is, till the end of the second three and a half years and thus at the end of the seven years. And lastly, Christ unmistakably taught that it was at this time, namely, after the time of the sign of His advent, that He would send forth His angels to gather His elect to Himself, the coming for and with His saints not being greatly separated in time but being almost synchronous, the one event taking place and then immediately afterwards the other (31, 36–41; Mark 13: 24–30; Luke 21: 25–28); which once more reveals the fact that the coming and the accompanying resurrection and translation would not occur until the end of the seven-year period.

36

This much then, the apostles and disciples might perceive. Nevertheless, it remained true that they could not know the day or hour of Christ's return (36, 44). For, while they could understand that the coming would take

place at the end of the tribulation and after the sign of the Son of man, they could not know accurately when the seven years would begin or hence, how short or long after its events the time of the advent would be, since God had not revealed this. It is interesting to note in this connection that the measurement of time, which Daniel gives, of the second portion of the seven years indicates that Christ may not come at the exact close of these years, the prophet mentioning, not the usual "thousand two hundred and threescore days" — three and a half years (Rev. 11: 23; 12: 6, 14; 13: 5) — but in one place, a "thousand two hundred and ninety days" — three and a half years and thirty days (Dan. 12: 11) — and in another, a "thousand three hundred and five and thirty days" — three and a half years and seventy-five days (Dan. 12: 12). This then, is additional evidence of the fact, while the apostles and early disciples could know the time of the coming approximately, that they could not know it exactly. This reasoning explains — and, apparently, it is the only one which does — the seeming inconsistency between Christ's two statements; "So also you, when you see all these *things*, know you that he is nigh, at the doors" (33); and "You know not on what day your Lord comes" (42). As a matter of fact, there is no inconsistency between the two statements, each being reconcilably and consistently true.

37

We have said that the apostles and disciples were told to watch, not only for Christ, but also for certain signs which were to precede His coming and which were thus to be the assurance both of its fact and also of its nearing approach. In connection with this statement, it is to be

noted that it is often declared by prophetic students that it would be mentally and spiritually impossible for one to watch for the Lord if one should also be obliged to look for signs, looking for the signs, as they say, making it impossible to watch for the person. This is true so far as watching for a momentarily expected event is concerned. But it is not true otherwise, for in such a case one would watch for the person through the signs, as often takes place in human affairs. This is the kind of watching which Paul did, in his time, for he wrote, " Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ " (Titus 3: 13), where the apostle looked for the appearing through the coming. And this is the kind of watching which Peter did, in his time, for he wrote, " Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness " (2 Pet. 3: 12, 13), where the apostle looked from a long time before the millennium for things which were not to come to pass until after that period of time. And this now is the kind of looking which the Lord enjoined upon His apostles and disciples, for He spoke of signs occurring both on earth (15) and in the heavens (29), and He specially named one of the last as " the sign of the Son of man " (30), all of which separately, the apostles and disciples were to see before they should look upon the returning Christ (30), and all of which conjointly were to be the evidence and promise of His nearing advent (29, 30; Mark 13: 24–26; Luke 21: 25–32). Watching, therefore, according to the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, was not to be a looking for a momentarily expected advent — except after all of the

signs had been fulfilled — but one wherein the eyes of faith should look forward to the advent through such events as Christ had said would precede it.

38

There is a certain clearly expressed truth in the New Testament which confirms the above statements and which needs special emphasizing, both because it is important and because it is usually set aside, or, at least, passed by. We refer to that one which signifies that it was wholly impossible in the apostolic days for believers to watch momentarily for the coming of Christ, in spite of the fact that the scriptures in Matt. 24: 42–44; Mark 13: 32–37 and Luke 21: 34–36 undoubtedly enjoin such watching. The reason of this is, that certain divinely predicted events had to be fulfilled before the momentary watching therein commanded could take place, and some of these were not fulfilled until the close of the apostolic period, while others were not fulfilled then, and indeed, have not been fulfilled since. This means that Christ's injunction to watch, as recorded in the passages quoted, did not have application in a momentary sense during the apostolic period, the predictions of intermediate events hindering the development of those conditions which made this kind of watching possible. If there were need, we could give a long list of minor and major prophecies recorded in the Gospels, Acts and Epistles which required fulfillment before the time of Christ's return; but we shall content ourselves with mentioning only three of these, each one of a major kind. First, Christ told Peter, when he was in middle life, that he should die and that this event should take place when he was an old man (John 21: 18), which meant that the apostle should live, as it turned out, about

thirty-five years longer, and hence, implied that he could not hope to see Christ's coming and could not watch momentarily for His return (2 Pet. 1: 13–15). And be it noted, that what was true of Peter was true of all the apostles and disciples who lived in Peter's time, for none of these could watch momentarily until Christ's prediction concerning the apostle had been fulfilled, that is, until he had become an old man and had died. Second, Christ spoke to Paul and said "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (Acts 22: 21), which word was heard by the apostle soon after his conversion at about 35 A.D., and which prediction lengthened out his life until, as we now know, he reached Rome at about 65 A.D. during which period of thirty years Paul could not have watched momentarily for Christ's return, the commandment of going "far hence" not being put into effect until the close of his life, when even then he, like Peter, was told that he must die (2 Tim. 4: 6–8). And be it noted that what was true of Paul was true of all believers who lived in Paul's time, for none of these could watch momentarily until the apostle had proceeded, not only to the Gentiles, but also "far hence" to these, and, at last, had died. And finally, Christ spoke to the apostles, at the time of His last interview with them, not only commanding them to go to all nations (Matt. 28: 19, 20), but also distinctly prophesying that they would do this, inasmuch as He said, "Ye *shall* be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8), which last undoubtedly meant, in its first intent, westward as far as Spain and eastward as far as India — the then known world — and which has come to mean, in its larger and more modern application, far more than these extremes, westward, eastward, northward and southward. And be it noted that the apostles and dis-

ciples could not look momentarily for the return of Christ until this command and prophecy had been brought to pass and the church had moved forward even unto "the uttermost part of the earth." These are unimpeachable facts; and they bring us back to the statements made in the foregoing paragraph to the effect that watching, in the apostolic days was looking for a more or less distant event through predicted intermediate events. It follows, therefore, that momentary watching is for a special and yet future class of believers, namely for those who will see all remaining intermediate prophecies fulfilled, including witnessing to the ends of the earth, and also the manifestation of the various signs spoken of by Christ as recorded in Matthew twenty-four and in similar passages of Scripture. In other words, when the church has witnessed to all the nations (14), when the Antichrist has run his course (15, 27) and when the sign of the Son of man has appeared (29, 30), then and then only may the followers of Christ watch momentarily for His return. All scriptural injunctions to "watch," "look," and "wait," therefore, are to be read in the light of these facts and to be interpreted in harmony with them.

39

The above mentioned truths are made more clear and certain when we keep in mind the meaning of the word "watch," as it fell from the Lord's lips. The word used is the Greek, *grēgoreuō,* which means literally, to keep awake. Now it is evident that the word, in this connection, cannot mean a physical keeping awake. It must, therefore, refer to a spiritual condition and attitude. It indicates, in other words, such a spiritual state as would keep those who were watching constantly vigilant as to

the events, each and all, which had been prophesied, and thus, in the present connection, ever prepared for and dedicated to the things which would make for the coming of the King and His kingdom.

40

In saying this last, it appears that one is not apart from the mind of Christ, for the final words of His discourse point directly and emphatically in the direction of the thought expressed. The words referred to come in the closing section of the chapter — what we have called, in the Analysis, the Conclusion — and are as follows: "Watch you, therefore, because you know not *on* what day your Lord comes. But this know you, that if the householder had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be dug through. Because of this also be you ready; because in *an* hour you think not, the Son of man comes. Who then is the faithful and discreet bondman, whom His Lord has placed over his household, to give to them the food in season? Blessed that bondman, whom, coming, his Lord will find so doing. Amen, I say to you, that over all his possessions he will place him. But if that worthless bondman shall say in his heart: My Lord delayeth, and shall begin to strike the fellow bondman, *and* shall eat and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that bondman will come in *a* day when he does not expect, and in *an* hour when he does not know; and will cut him in two, and will appoint his portion with the hypocrites; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (42–51).

41

It will be seen from the foregoing words that there are two figures of speech contained in them, each of which is based upon a similar set of circumstances, but each of which has a different lesson-objective. The first, is the picture of a householder, who possesses certain property and who finds it to his personal interest to preserve it intact from the danger of robbers. The second, is a picture of a bondman, who has been raised — like Joseph of old (Gen. 39: 1–6) — from his position of slavery into that of stewardship, and hence, who, while still a bondman, is responsible for his master's interests in the house and field. Behind both of these pictures lies the certainty of an anticipated but finally a sudden coming; in the first place, of a thief, who digs through the wall of the house in order to steal, and in the second, of the master who appears in order to discover whether his bondman-steward has been faithful or unfaithful and to judge him accordingly. The background of each parable, therefore, is certainty as to visitation, but uncertainty as to the time and manner of the event. The foreground of each is in the one case preparedness in view of personal interests, and in the other, of faithfulness in view of another's interests, that is, the master's. But the essential thing to notice in both parables is this, that the application is spiritual; that the duty of each individual is to keep vigilant in the fulfillment of his trust; and that keeping vigilant is being ready for the one who is to come and being found prepared for all that the coming may mean. In other words — to apply now the Lord's teaching to prophecy — the final test of watching for Christ's coming is not holding certain views as to the time and process of the coming, however valuable all prophetic knowledge is,

but rather, that of a life attachment and devotion to the Lord, by reason of which the individual concerned will be kept spiritually alert and faithful, and thus ever prepared for the return, whenever and however it may take place.

42

It seems certain that the above is the impression which Christ sought to produce upon the minds of His apostles and disciples. He taught them that He would return; He told them that His return would occur after certain events; and He declared that the exact day and hour could not be known; He exhorted them, therefore, for their own sakes and for His sake, to live in view of His advent and so be ready and prepared whenever it might take place; and finally, He declared that the one who so watched would be blessed and the one who did not so watch would be cursed. Let us repeat it then; watching is keeping wide awake spiritually, and being faithful continually to all the obligations which the coming One has imposed upon us. In other words, it is, as the Master said, occupying till He shall come (Luke 19: 13). And this includes being vigilant as to the meaning and value of each prophetic event, whether it be nearer or farther away.

43

Christ, in pointing out to His apostles and disciples the need of watchfulness, gave a simple and at the same time, a sure test by which they were to be safeguarded from Antichrist's deceits and thus be made ready for His return. And here too, in order that His words may be freshly before us, we shall quote them in full: "Then if any say to you: Behold, here the Christ, or, Here, believe not.

For false christs will arise, and false prophets, and will give great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have foretold *it* to you. If therefore they will say to you: Behold, he is in the wilderness, do not go out; Behold, in the secret chamber, do not believe. For as the lightning comes out from *the* east, and shines as far as *the* west, so also will be the coming of the Son of man. Wherever the carcase may be, there the vultures will be gathered together." (23–28). Here then, is the frank statement that Antichrist's temptations would be so subtle and persuasive that the disciples, as they should see the multiplied signs and wonders of the false prophets, would almost be misled, wondering if Christ might not be where they said, in the wilderness — outside of Jerusalem — or in the secret chambers — within Jerusalem and in its temple. How then, in such evil and perplexing days, would they know how and where to look for their returning Lord? And how would they be able to recognize the self-deified Antichrist and his followers? To distinguish truth from error, is not easy at any time, and how much more difficult it would be in these peculiar days when truth would seem altogether like error and error altogether like truth.

44

It was this condition of things which the Lord foresaw and from the danger of which He desired to deliver His followers. So He said, in effect; "Be not deceived! By this token you may recognize Me and My appearing. I am not from beneath but from above, and I and My manifestation will be like a lightning flash from heaven, sudden, bright and illuminating. And also, by this token you may recognize the Antichrist and his appearing. He

is not from above but from beneath, and he and his appearing will be like a beast's carcase lying on some field of earth, around which the foul birds of prey will gather and upon which they will feed. And hence, in watching for me, look not below but above, look not around on earth but steadfastly toward heaven. Thus and thus only, will you be able to distinguish the true from the false, the heavenly from the earthly, Myself from the Antichrist and his followers. But doing this, you will be saved." Such was a touch-stone of discernment and deliverance which Christ put into the hands of His apostles and disciples. And a little later, in the midst of terrible sufferings and temptations, the spiritual principle involved in this test proved adequate to their need. And what it was in the past in principle, it will be in the future both in principle and fact, in the midst of the greater trials which are to be.

45

We have, at last, come to a question which we have been gradually approaching and which we are forced now to face, it being one of vital interest and importance. The question arises from two or three facts which have either been commented upon or must presently be observed. Let us then, state these facts as follows: first, we have said that Christ told His apostles and disciples that their generation would not pass until what He had prophesied should be fulfilled; second, that the time referred to would be that of the Antichrist, and that it would produce the days of the " tribulation " and " great tribulation "; third, that Christ declared that His hearers would see the Antichrist and be in the midst of his persecutions; and lastly, that the Master prophesied that those who heard His words would see the sign of the Son of man, and, there-

after, His appearing. And now, we are obliged to admit, in view of common historical evidence, that that generation did pass; that the apostles and early disciples, whatever they saw and suffered, did not see the Antichrist nor pass through the time of the tribulation and great tribulation; and that not one of those who heard the prophecy beheld the sign of the Son of man or the great event which was to follow, namely, the advent of the Lord. Here, indeed, is a difficulty, one which is so great that it has led some persons to scoff at prophetic truth; has led others to deny both the intelligence and veracity of Christ; has led numerous saints to be greatly perplexed over seeming contradictions between prophecy and fact; and finally, as we believe, has led not a few students of the Word to make statements which, though designed to explain existing difficulties, have produced misunderstanding and actually led to increased confusion.

46

Referring to these last individuals, we may mention the fact, by way of illustration, that various teachers have affirmed that the word "generation" as used in verse twenty-four, was not meant to signify the generation in which the apostles and first disciples lived, but rather, the genus or race of the Jews. They have thus sought to accommodate the meaning of the word to the historic fact that the apostolic generation did pass away without the Lord's returning. But, in doing this, they have set aside, as it seems to us, the natural, etymological and scriptual meaning of the word and the only one which the context of the chapter will possibly allow (33, 34; Mark 13: 29, 30; Luke 21: 31, 32). We may also mention the fact, by way of further illustration, that some teachers have made the

assertion that Christ never taught that the apostles and early disciples would live in the days of the Antichrist, be involved in the tribulation and continue on earth long enough to see the sign of the Son of man, but, on the contrary, that He instructed them that He would return before the seven-year period of the Antichrist had begun and would deliver them from all that its days would bring, and hence, that they would be in heaven and not on earth when the sign of the Son of man should appear. But in making these statements, they have quite passed over such a word as this, "When therefore you see the abomination of the desolation, (the *one which* was spoken of through Daniel the prophet), standing in *the* holy place; the *one* reading let him consider" (15); and this, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21: 28); and this, "So also you, when you see all these *things*, know you that he is nigh, at *the* doors" (33). In short, with the above passages before us, we cannot but fear that there has not always been a frank facing of Scripture truth; and we cannot but wonder if it has not sometimes occurred here, as in other relationships of life, that the wish has been the father to the thought, resulting in such a disposition as has unconsciously led to the devising of a prophetic plan, with its deliverance from persecution and suffering, which is pleasing to the natural man, but is not in accordance with the Word of God. Of these matters we are not the judge and we cannot express a positive opinion. Nevertheless, we are constrained to say that it is our conviction that the commonly held prophetic outline needs reconsideration and recasting, and that the one which Christ Himself gave in Matthew twenty-four and elsewhere must be accepted and adhered to, whatever the issue may mean to us and others.

And now, it is to this point and place of frank consideration that our studies have brought us. But, first of all, let us see, while preserving all of the scriptural and historical facts of which we have spoken and which have the appearance of being wholly contradictory to one another, if there is not a natural and rightful harmonization of these.

47

One of the most plain and impressive truths of the Gospels is, that Christ, when He was on earth, was making a *bona fide* offer of Himself and His kingdom to national Israel. Such a kingdom offer had been the promise held out to the Jews in the Old Testament (Ps. 72: 1–19; Isa. 32: 1–20; 35: 1–10); and Christ came in order to be, in His person and preaching, the fulfiller of these old-time prophecies (Luke 1: 26–33; 67–79). In utterance and by many signs, therefore, He sought to prove that He was the promised Messias and that He stood ready to establish the messianic kingdom (Matt. 10: 1–7). Another most plain and impressive truth in the Gospels is, that Christ never offered Himself and His kingdom to the Jews except on the basis of the fulfillment by them of certain conditions. One of these conditions was that they should repent of their sins, of which John's baptism was the outward sign (Matt. 3: 1–6; 4: 17; Mark, 1: 14, 15); and another was that they should receive Him as their King, the One who had been sent from God to lead them into His promised kingdom (Matt. 4: 17, 23; 10: 1–7; Luke 10: 1–9). Now, Christ all through His ministry foreknew that He would ultimately be rejected by Israel, and He gradually foretold this through a series of national parables (Matt. 21: 28–32; 21: 33–45; 22: 2–14; 25: 14–30; Luke 13: 6–9; 14: 16–24; 19: 11–27). At the same time, He never

took advantage of this foreknowledge in His dealings with the Jews, whether He was addressing apostles, disciples or unbelievers. From first to last, He always and without reservation offered Himself and His kingdom to Israel. If there was to be failure of any kind it would not be on His part, but on that of those who heard His message but would not accept it. His prophetic utterances, therefore, were given from the standpoint of His full intention, after His death and resurrection, to reveal Himself as King and set up His kingdom. This, of course, implied — even as He said (34) — that these events would occur in that generation.

48

These statements explain that mysterious assertion in reference to John the Baptist, which Christ made in the early part of His ministry, "This is Elias which was for to come" (Matt. 11: 14). Now it is undeniable that Christ knew that John the Baptist was not Elias. Nevertheless, He said that he was. And the reason why He so spoke was that John the Baptist would have been Elias if Israel had accepted Him, and he was not the prophet only because the nation was about to reject Him. In other words, if Christ had foreseen that the Jews would receive Him and His kingdom, He would have sent as His forerunner Elias in person, instead of the Baptist; but foreknowing that they would reject Him and His kingdom, He sent John, as the representative of Elias and in his spirit. When Christ comes again, since He will then know that Israel will receive Him and His kingdom (Zech. 12: 9–14; 13: 1–9), He will send as His forerunner, according to God's promise, none other than Elias himself (Mal. 3: 1; 4: 5, 6; Matt. 17: 1–3; Rev. 11: 3–6). This then was Christ's constant attitude toward the Jews. In

effect He was always speaking thus: "I am the Messias, your King. Here and now I offer to you and am prepared to give you the messianic kingdom. It is yours, provided you will accept it." Hence it was that He said — quoting now His full sentence — "If ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come" (Matt. 11: 14).

49

In addition to the above, the following important truth is to be recognized. A careful reading of the Gospel prophecies will reveal the fact that Christ never assumed the attitude of taking it for granted that the Jews would refuse to accept Him and His kingdom. This, no doubt, is one reason, during His earthly sojourn, why He did not talk about the revelation and establishment of His church which was finally to be produced, His purpose in this respect — the King and kingdom offer to Israel then holding good — being kept in the background. And it was thus, to the last of His life on earth, yea, even after Pentecost, that He held open His offer to the Jewish nation, pleading in person, and later, through Peter, Stephen and Paul, for its acceptance (Acts 2: 14–39; 3: 12–26; 13: 44–47). There were times, with His apostles, when He was more intimately frank, when, teaching directly by statement or indirectly by parable, He portrayed an untoward and sorrowful ending in respect to Himself and the kingdom. But in general, even with His apostles, this was not the case. In short, Christ fulfilled every condition necessary to make good the Father's promises to Israel; and hence, He went about, as it were, with the kingdom in His hand and with His hand outstretched and wide open. His utterances, therefore, were in harmony with and expressive of this attitude. As He

would say nothing, so He would do nothing which would hinder the accepting of the offer that He was making; and also, as He would say everything, so He would do everything which would lead to the acceptance of this offer.

50

We are now able to observe that the course which Christ thus took, is the explanation of the nature and trend of His prophetic statements, including those in Matthew twenty-four, Mark thirteen, Luke seventeen and Luke twenty-one. If the Jewish nation, officially and generally, had accepted Him, we are safe in saying that He would have died on the cross; would have risen from the dead; would have ascended into heaven; would have poured out His spirit upon His disciples; would have suffered the Antichrist to rise and carry on his persecutions; and then, sometime in that generation, would have returned to His disciples and nation and set up the kingdom which, according to the promise will never be destroyed (Dan. 2: 45). This was His programme, so far as His offer is concerned. Hence, in our prophetic passage, Christ said, "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars" (6); "When therefore you see the abomination of the desolation (the *one which* was spoken of through Daniel the prophet), standing in *the* holy place" (15); "And pray you that your flight be not in winter, nor on Sabbath" (20); "If therefore they shall say to you: Behold, he is in the wilderness, do not go out; Behold, in the secret chambers, do not believe" (26); "So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (Luke 21: 31); "So also you, when you see all these *things,* know you that he is nigh, at *the* doors" (33); "Amen, I say to you, this generation will in no wise pass away till all these *things* be accomplished" (34). In

other words, Christ, making an offer of the kingdom without deceit or reservation, spoke as if the Jewish nation would accept it, and hence, that the apostles would live to see it and all the events which would precede it.

51

Passing on into the further issue of things, we would remind our readers that it is a well-known, as it is an infinitely sad fact, that the Jews rejected their King, and, with Him, His kingdom (Luke 19: 11–27). They crucified the One who had over His head the title: "This is Jesus the King of the Jews" (Matt. 27: 37); and in effect, they thus cried, according to Christ's prophetic word, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19: 14, 27; John 19: 14, 15). Moreover, they deliberately and officially rejected those whom Christ subsequently sent to plead His cause, such as Peter (Acts 4: 1, 2, 21; 5: 27, 28, 33), and Stephen (Acts 7: 54–60) and, at a later time, Paul (Acts 25: 1–3; 28: 17–29). And this action on their part, sealed for that time, their national doom. From henceforth, for many long and weary years — as we now well know — they were to be a nation "scattered and peeled" (Isa. 18: 2), exiled from their city and land (Isa. 1: 1–9), and reviled and persecuted in every nation where they might seek refuge (Jer. 8: 1–22). Not that God would ever forget the promises made unto the fathers (Jer. 3: 12–18), for all that He declared to them must be fulfilled (Isa. 11: 1–16; 12: 1–6; 14: 1–3). Nevertheless, He rejected Israel and turned from the old order to a new. This turning, however, was not accomplished at once. There was first a transition period, which is represented by the book of the Acts, wherein God still brooded over Israel. But finally, the break came, and then God turned from Israel to the Gentiles.

52

It was in this way that God came forth with a plan which had been prepared from all eternity, but which was only now openly revealed, namely, the forming, out of the Jews and Gentiles, a new body which should be His church (Acts 15: 13–17; Eph. 3: 1–6) and which should be world-wide, both in its derivation and relationship (Matt. 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15; Acts 13: 2–4; Rom. 1: 14–16). And thus He began to speak, particularly through His revelations to Paul, of this great conception of His, it being the most high, holy and far-reaching of any which He had so far made known to men (Eph. 1: 1–14; 2: 1–10; 3: 1–11). And so necessarily, as He assumed this altered attitude, with this new objective and project before Him, the Jewish kingdom affairs, while not given up, were put in abeyance. Thus it came to pass that the prophecies of Matthew twenty-four, Mark thirteen, Luke seventeen and Luke twenty-one became, for the time being, inapplicable and inoperative, the fulfillment of these being postponed until all that God purposed to do in the new order of things should be brought to pass; and hence, suddenly, the present tenses of these prophetic chapters, became future ones. This then, is where the prophecies of the four passages now are. They remain the unbreakable word of Christ (35). At the same time, the bringing to pass of their predictions is deferred until some unknown future time. But at that time, as Christ taught, there will be a last period of seven years, when once more God's providential movements will be directed toward Palestine and Israel; the rise, reign and self-deification of the Antichrist and the consequent persecution of the saints and the destruction of many of them will occur; the sign and portents promised will be given;

the sending forth of the angels for the elect will take place; and, at last, immediately after the sign of the Son of man, the Lord will appear, will destroy the Antichrist and his followers and will set up the kingdom of which there shall be no end (Dan. 2: 44).

53

By referring, in a previous paragraph, to the fact that the apostles and disciples whom Christ addressed were, after Pentecost, to be Christians, and to the added fact that they represented others who, in the last days, were likewise to be Christians, we touched upon, so far as the church is concerned, the most important part of our subject; for it is plain that the scriptural answer to the question thus raised vitally affects the earthly destiny of many believers, and, possibly, ourselves. If, for instance, Christ declared that the apostles and early disciples would go into the days of the Antichrist and suffer his persecutions, but did not mean to infer that they would be members of the body of Christ or that they represented others who would be such, then, from a personal and practical standpoint, the prophecies of the four chapters have little relationship to us. But, on the other hand, if He intended to teach that these apostles and disciples were themselves to be Christians, and thus that they fitly and fully represented other Christians of a later day, then the prophecies relate themselves to us and demand our closest consideration. For, in this latter case and from a present-day standpoint, it becomes evident that tempting and dark days lie before the church, and that these may be nearer to us than we think. There is need, therefore, that the saints should both study and preach prophecy, that days of trial may not take them unawares.

54

Before we discuss this part of our subject, there is an incidental question which needs our attention. This is as to whether God loves His saints too well, as is often said, to allow them to suffer seriously, as, for instance, to live face to face with the Antichrist and endure his persecutions. Our answer to this question must be found from the Scripture, and also, from historical experience. Keeping both of these in view, may we ask, Did God love His only begotten Son so well that He spared Him from serious physical suffering? and again, Did He love the apostles and early disciples so well as to spare them? and again, Did He love the Christians of the Reformation period so well as to spare them? and again, Did He love those who have more recently passed through the persecutions of Madagascar, China and Armenia so well as to spare them? To ask these questions is to answer them. Indeed, it may be said, in spite of the uniqueness of the life of Jesus, that what was true of Him, so far as physical suffering is concerned, must necessarily be true of His followers, for as is the Head so are the members, and also, Christ Himself declared that, "The servant is not greater than his lord" (Matt. 10: 24, 25; John 15: 20). Paul, in his time, spoke of suffering in this wise — reading the words literally — "To you it was granted" (as a privilege) "concerning Christ, not only to believe on him, but also concerning him to suffer" (Phil. 1: 29). In fact, in God's economy and for this present time, suffering is to be regarded, not as an unnatural experience, but instead, as a most natural one (Rom. 8: 35, 36). Our surprise, therefore, may well be, not when we suffer, but rather when we do not. There is a saying which fell from the lips of the apostle Paul which, in these easy and

comfortable days, has to most of us only a reminiscent sound: "We must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14: 22). Well will it be for us, whatever the true interpretation of prophecy is, if we shall make sure to fortify our spirits by keeping the fact well in mind that this saying, with others like it, is still enshrined in Holy Writ.

55

In addition to the above, we are to remember that the principle of Christians facing the Antichrist and enduring his persecutions is written large in the Scriptures, for it is made very clear therein that the church has ever stood before and in opposition to antichrists (1 John 2: 18, 22; 4: 3, 7), and has ever suffered persecution from systems ruled by such (Matt. 2: 16–18; 5: 11, 44; 23: 34; John 15: 20; 19: 13–18; Acts 8: 1; 11: 19; 13: 50; 2 Tim. 3: 12). For the church, therefore, to go into the days of the Antichrist and to be called upon to endure his hatred and harassments, is but for her to pass from one phase of an experience into another, the difference being, not in kind, but in degree. Moreover, the fact that Christians have faced past antichrists and suffered because of them, presents strong, presumptive evidence that they will face the future Antichrist and suffer because of him. Whatever may be true in regard to this last, it is unmistakably plain that suffering on the part of the church because of antichrists is not inconsistent, but rather, wholly harmonious with the thought and fact of God's most tender love. The question of divine love permitting such suffering, therefore, is not one which needs to be considered. The only question which we are called upon to decide is this, whether or not the saints going through the tribulation is a divine revelation.

56

We come now to the question, Whom did the apostles and disciples, who heard the prophetic utterance of our Lord in Matthew twenty-four and concerning whom He spoke therein, represent? In seeking to answer this, let us put our reply in a series of statements: First, the apostles and disciples must have represented — since an antitype is always like its type — a class of persons who would be exactly like themselves, namely, those who would be both Jews and disciples. This thought is confirmed by the fact, first, that the prophecy is Jewish and Palestinian in its setting (2, 15–17, 20), and second, that it portrays full discipleship inasmuch as it sets forth a great devotion on the part of the disciples to Christ's person (9, 14). Second, the apostles and disciples must have represented, not simply Jewish discipleship, but as well Christian discipleship, since the apostles were potentially Christians, and, only a little later, were actually such; and also, since to deny this fact would lead one into an impossible scriptural position; for to say that they did not represent Christians as well as Jews in the prophecies under consideration would be to affirm likewise that they did not represent them in other prophetic passages. In this case, for instance, this would be true of the fourteenth of John, where we have the words, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14: 2, 3), which words are such applicable and comforting ones to Christians as to make it impossible to conceive that they were not meant for them. Third, the apostles and disciples must have represented Christians because, as a result of unanswerable logic and thus by common consent, they did

so in other and equally vital matters. For instance, the great commission (Matt. 28: 18–20; Mark 16: 13–18; John 20: 21) was given to the apostles and to them alone, it never having been repeated in later times; yet Christians at large, including Paul, accepted its mandate as applicable to themselves through the full course of their lives, as has also been true of a host of Spirit-taught disciples who have lived and served through later times. Fourth, the apostles and disciples must have represented Christians as well as Jews in view of the fact that they were not to participate in the events prophesied until after Pentecost had come, that is, not until they themselves had become Christians by being baptized by the one Spirit into the one body of Christ (Zech. 12: 9, 10; Luke 24: 49; 1 Cor. 12: 13). It is to be remembered, if the Jews had accepted Jesus as their King, that the order of events, as set forth by Matthew twenty-four and cognate passages, would have been this: the crucifixion; the resurrection; the ascension; the outpouring of the Spirit (Pentecost); the revelation and reign of the Antichrist; the tribulation; the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom in the midst of persecutions; the sign of the Son of man; the sending forth of the angels to gather the elect; the appearing of the Son of man; and finally, the establishment of the kingdom. But it will be seen from this outline that the experiences of the seven-year period would have been subsequent to Pentecost, which means that the apostles and early disciples, if they had been actually called upon to fulfill the incidents of the prophecies, would have been at the time of the fulfillment, not only Jewish disciples, but also Christian disciples. Lastly, the apostles and early disciples must have represented Christians because the phraseology of Matthew twenty-four and its allied passages is distinctly Christian in character. According

to the prophecy, those who fulfill its events are described as follows: they are hated on account of Christ's name (9); they, through enduring to the full end, are delivered (13); they go forth to all the nations preaching the good tidings (14); they have the wisdom of the Holy Spirit so that they are able to understand Daniel's writings (15; Dan. 12: 10); they have so much of the fulness of the Holy Spirit that they are directly and specially taught by Him in time of peril (Mark 13: 11; Luke 21: 14, 15); they suffer, because of their devotion to Christ, persecution and even martyrdom (16–22; Mark 13: 11–20; Luke 21: 16, 17); they are numbered among the elect of God (24); they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (30); they are gathered as the elect from the four winds of heaven, from one end of heaven to the other (31; Luke 17: 34–36); they have part in the first resurrection and translation, that one which is before the millennium and from which all others than Christians are excluded (40, 41; Luke 21: 18; 1 Thess. 4: 13–17; Rev. 20: 1–6); and finally, they are commanded to watch and wait for Christ's appearing as only true Christians are called upon and are able to do this (33, 42; Mark 13: 33–37; Luke 21: 28, 31, 36).

57

The above reasoning seems to be confirmed by considering the possible alternatives to our conclusion, and by a process of elimination concerning them. Let us present these as follows: First, Christ did not teach that the apostles and early disciples would go into the days of the Antichrist because He did not say what He meant and did not mean what He said; which statement, considering our Lord's personality and character, must be at

once rejected since it is nigh to blasphemy. Second, Christ said what He meant and meant what He said, but, when He declared that the apostles and early disciples would see the Antichrist and suffer his persecutions, He intended to convey the thought that they would pass through these experiences as Jews and not as Christians; which statement can not be held in view of the fact that He told these same apostles and early disciples that they were to be baptized by the Holy Spirit (John 14: 16–18; 15: 26; 16: 7–11; Luke 24: 49; Acts 1: 4–8), this signifying that they were to be baptized into the body of Christ and hence, were to be Christians (Acts 21: 4, 5; 2: 1–4, 14–18, 38, 39; 1 Cor. 12: 12, 13). Third, Christ, while assuming in His discourse, since He was then offering the kingdom to the Jews, that the apostles and early disciples would suffer in the tribulation of the Antichrist, was speaking to them representatively, that is, as standing for a class of persons like themselves who would live, not in that generation but in a later one, but, in doing this, He did not mean to imply that these last named persons would be wholly like the apostles and early disciples, but only partly so, that is, would be Jews and not Christians; which statement is unwarrantable since it is manifestly contrary to the law of scriptural interpretation as related to types and antitypes, the first invariably and completely representing the last, as far as a type may represent an antitype. Fourth, Christ taught that the saints, dead and living, would be caught up to meet Him in the air at His coming, that this coming would occur before the seven-year rule of the Antichrist, that during the tribulation of the following seven years many persecuted ones would be converted, that these would form a last band of Christians, and then, that these too, dead and living, would be caught up to meet the Lord in the air

as He descends to the earth with those saints who were previously resurrected and translated; which statement might be held as truth if there were any scripture to confirm it, but which may not be so held in view of the fact that no scripture even suggests such a process of events and many scriptures positively contradict it. Fifth, Christ supplemented the teaching which He gave in the Gospels by revelations which He made in the Epistles, and, in doing this, He superseded and contradicted the teaching formerly given by stating that His coming, with the gathering of the saints to Himself, was to take place previous to the revelation of the Antichrist, thus making it impossible for the saints to pass through the tribulation; which statement is to be dismissed as unscriptural, for nowhere do the Epistles state that the coming will take place before the tribulation, most passages being silent as to the time (1 Thess. 4: 13–18; 5: 1–11; 2 Thess. 1: 7–10; Titus 2: 13; Heb. 9: 28) and some passages strongly teaching a post-tribulation advent (1 Cor. 15: 52; Rev. 10: 7; 20: 4). These suppositions, so far as we see, are the only ones which may be considered as alternatives to the conclusion which we have reached, namely, that living Christians will go into and through the tribulation. If then, all of these alternatives are to be rejected, we must conclude that the teaching of Matthew twenty-four is to stand. We thus judge that the advent of Christ and the gathering of the elect to Him occur after the sign of the Son of man is seen (30), and hence, is at the close of or after the great tribulation (29–41).

58

For the above reasons, we cannot hold, as some do, that the apostles and disciples whom Christ addressed represent, from a present-day standpoint, a post-advent class

of persons, who are converted into a lower order of Jewish saints by the coming of Christ and the consequent resurrection and translation of the church, and who, therefore, are not members of the body of Christ. By every token of true interpretation, so far as we can judge, they stand for all Christians, but particularly, for those who, being Jewish, are assembled in Palestine during the seven years of the life and activity of the Antichrist; who have the privilege of witnessing for Christ in the midst of a cataclysm of evil; and who have the high honor of testifying before and against this superlative monster of wickedness, the Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2: 3–13; Rev. 11: 1–12). At that time, we believe, all that Christ said in Matthew twenty-four to and of his hearers — which He then offered to bring to pass, but which later He indefinitely postponed — will be fully accomplished. Then His saying, namely, that that generation will not pass until all the things prophesied have been fulfilled, will become fully and literally true. For in that generation, the Antichrist will appear, his persecutions will take place, the sign of the Son of man will be seen, the angels will gather the elect, and, finally, the Son of man will come. Also, in that generation, the admonition to watch will be given full effect, not as now as for an event delayed by divine predictions, but as one which is, at last, unhindered and is to be looked for expectantly and momentarily.

59

It is clear, in this dispensation of the Holy Spirit, that God is undertaking a great work, which He began at Pentecost and will finish at the consummation of the age (Matt. 28: 20, Greek), this being the gathering out of His elect body from both Jewish and Gentile communi-

ties the world over (Matt. 28: 18–20; Acts 2: 5–11; 13: 46; 15: 13, 14; Rom. 1: 16; Rev. 5: 8–10; 15: 1–4); and, additionally, the preparing, in spite of long-suffering grace, the ungodly peoples of the earth for inevitable and destroying judgment (Joel 3: 9–17; Zech. 14: 1–3; Acts 2: 32–35; Rev. 11: 15–18; 19: 11–21). That God has taken long for the accomplishment of His designs is not surprising, for He has not been willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3: 9). How much longer He may take, in the further expression of His grace, is known only to the Father (38; Acts 1: 7). But this is certain; the two prophetic lines of salvation and judgment are gradually converging, and one day will surely meet. And this too, seems to be certain, that this meeting will be a climax of events; of godly life and faithful testimony on the part of believers (14); of God-defying anarchy and blasphemy on the part of the Antichrist and his followers (15; 2 Thess. 2: 7–12); of rescue and glorification of persecuted saints on the part of Christ (23–27; 2 Thess. 1: 5–10; Rev. 11: 1–9); and of destruction and punishment of the wicked on the part of God (37–39; Jude 14, 15; Rev. 19: 11–21). And this also appears to be certain; that the culmination of the above events will take place at the close of the present age, somewhere within or beyond the last days of the seven-year period of the reign of the Antichrist, and in connection with and as a result of the coming and appearing of Him who is both Son of man and Son of God.

60

How far the evil activities of the Antichrist will extend beyond Palestine, the Scripture does not make altogether plain. The prophetic chapters which we have been considering are wholly silent upon the subject, for the mani-

fest reason that Christ was speaking in these passages in a pre-pentecostal time and to and about Jewish believers. But there are hints in certain parallel passages of the Revelation, written after it had been made clear by Paul that the church was to contain Gentiles as well as Jews (Eph. 3: 1–8), which point to a world-wide, and, therefore, church-wide persecution and suffering. These hints are as follows: In the first place, Antichrist is undoubtedly a Grecian, and, as such, rules at first as king of Greece over an extensive European and Syrian territory, like Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. 11: 21–45; 12: 1–4). In the second place, Antichrist, toward the middle of his career, is made the Emperor of a tenfold kingdom-confederacy, which probably will be a revived and enlarged Roman Empire (Dan. 2: 40–45; Rev. 17: 7–13). In the third place, Antichrist, as a European Emperor, comes to have power over the earth at large (Rev. 13: 7–8). In the fourth place, the harlot, which is an apostate church and which acts in conjunction with the beast, that is, the Antichrist, corrupts the whole earth with her sorceries (Rev. 17: 1, 2, 15). In the fifth place, the tribulation involves, not only Palestine, but also the whole world (Rev. 3: 10; 13: 6, 7). And in the last place, God's judgments, as expressed through His two witnesses, are co-extensive with world-ungodliness, and they fall, therefore, upon the earth at large, (Rev. 11: 3–6). Judging from these various scriptures, it is probably true that the prophetic utterances of the Lord, as recorded in the four passages which have been before us, are to be regarded as having a more ample and far-reaching meaning than their form of words suggests. In their first application, they look toward the apostolic age, Jewish Christians and the land of Palestine; but in their second, they have in view the future end of the age, both Jewish and Gentile Christians and

all of the countries of the world. We judge, therefore, that the Antichrist, being an earth ruler, will persecute the godly, whoever they may be and wherever they may be found.

61

We would conclude by saying that the prophetic truth in Matthew twenty-four and elsewhere which Christ committed to His disciples was not intended to make and did not make them spiritual pacifists. It did make them idealists, giving them standards and aspirations of a heavenly sort (1 Thess. 1: 4–10), and causing their thought and love to be concentrated upon the person of their risen, ascended and coming Lord (Phil. 3: 20, 21; Heb. 9: 28). But aside from these results — which proved refining, elevating and energizing — the apostles and disciples who heard Christ speak of the things which were to come, remained and more and more became intensely and immensely energetic in life and work. After the death of Christ, they sought and obtained the filling of the Holy Spirit; and subsequently, they gave themselves to holy living and devoted serving. Manifestly, therefore, the blessed hope, in the case of the apostles and disciples, did not cut a single filament of the nerve of missions, not to speak of severing that nerve. Indeed the hope had just the opposite effect upon them, for under its influence they gave themselves to a wide-spread preaching of the gospel (Acts 8: 4; 13: 4) and to a prolonged and methodical effort to build up the church of Christ wherever it had been established (Acts 20: 28–32). The prophetic teaching which they had received disabused their minds of many conceptions which had been naturally but falsely theirs, putting God's programme of events into their thoughts and in place of their own (Acts 1: 6–8;

15: 13–17). They went forth, therefore, highly sober, steadfast and potent persons, preaching the Word, with signs following (Mark 16: 19, 20); and presently, thus equipped, they turned the world upside down (Acts 17: 5, 6). In addition, these apostles and disciples who looked for Christ's return, had large conceptions of God's compassions and purposes, for they both attempted and expected great things in the way of soul-saving, believing that the gospel was the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1: 16) and that the Lord was not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3: 9). And lastly, those who had been thus encouraged by the hope of the advent to begin the evangelization of the world, found that hope, even through obstacles, tribulations and sufferings, to be their inspiration even to the end of their earthly service. It was thus that they were saved from the fatal mistake of changing their aspirations from the eternal to the temporal, from heaven to earth, and from the Lord to the church, and were enabled to keep their minds and hearts fixed upon the object which had been set before them, namely, the return from heaven of the Son of man and the consequent setting up of the kingdom of which He was to be the exalted and universal King. It came to pass in this wise that Peter, the flaming evangelist, wrote as an old man and just before his death concerning Christ's return, saying, "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3: 13); and also that John, the tranquil builder up of the church, cried out in almost the last days of his greatly prolonged life, saying, "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Rev. 1: 7). And all this, without doubt, was the result which Christ anticipated when He gave His followers His prophetic

revelation, for it is to be noted that He declared that it would be none other than advent watchers, thus prophetically instructed, who, in the last days, would preach the gospel in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and who, finally, would complete the work of world-wide evangelization and bring to pass the return of the Son of man and the end of the age (14). Christ's utterances in Matthew twenty-four — and the same is true of all the prophetic scriptures — have it, therefore, as their objective to produce spiritually wholesome and balanced Christians, who, being enheartened and energized by the blessed hope, will watch as they work and work as they watch. We may say then, that prophecy holds at the heart of it two transcendently important messages, which the church is ever obligated reverently to hold and sacredly to obey. The first is,

"Behold, I come!"

and the second is,

"Occupy, till I come!"

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(*Condensed*)

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      11: 15
      1. First trumpet.....8: 7
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      3. Third trumpet..8: 10, 11
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      3. Third thunder.....10: 4
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      5. Fifth thunder.....10: 4
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THE LITERAL TRANSLATION

THE FIRST SECTION

The General Introduction

1: 1–8

This introduction is general in character and is related to the whole book. It contains the Spirit-given title of the book (1: 1) and has for its special theme Jesus Christ, who was, who is and who is to come (1: 4, 8). It is made up of explanations (1: 1, 7), exhortations (1: 3), promises (1: 7, 8), ascriptions of praise (1: 5, 6) and benedictions (1: 3, 4).

1 *An* apocalypse [or, uncovering, revelation] of Jesus Christ, which (the) God gave to him to show to his bondmen what *things* must be done in speed; and he signified *it,* having sent *it* through his angel to his bondman, to John: **2** who testified the word of (the) God, and the witnessing of Jesus Christ, whatsoever *things* he saw. **3** Blessed the *one* reading, and the *ones* hearing the words of the prophecy, and guarding the *things* written in it; for the time *is* nigh.

4 John to the seven churches, which are in (the) Asia; Grace to you and peace from the *one* existing and the *one who* was and the *one* coming; and from the seven Spirits which are in the presence of his throne; **5** and from Jesus Christ, the witness, the faithful, the first born of the dead, and the chief of the kings of the earth; to the *one* loving us and having loosed us from our sins in his

blood, 6 and he made us *a* kingdom, priests to (the) God and his Father; to him *be* the glory and the dominion to the aeons of the aeons; amen.

7 Behold, he comes with the clouds, and every eye will see him, and those who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will wail over him; yea, amen. 8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, says *the* Lord (the) God, the *one* existing and the *one who* was and the *one* coming, the Almighty.

THE SECOND SECTION

The Seven Periods

1: 9 to 22: 5

PERIOD I — THE SEVEN LETTERS

1: 9 to 3: 22

The Introduction

1: 9–20

This introduction is special in character and is related to the letter or church period. It is the divine foreview, as seen from the heavenly standpoint, of the church conditions on earth, particularly during the days of the Antichrist. It reveals Christ as the High Priest of His people, standing in the midst of the golden candlesticks, which are declared to be the seven churches. Its purpose is to warn, comfort and strengthen the saints by giving them to see the ascended and glorified Lord as the One who is in the presence of God for them and is all powerful in their behalf.

9 I John, your brother, and fellow-partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was in the island the *one* called Patmos, on account of the word of (the) God, and the witnessing of Jesus. 10 I was in *the* Spirit in the Lord's day; and heard behind me *a* loud voice, as of *a* trumpet, 11 saying: What thou seest write in *a* small scroll and send to the seven churches; to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamum, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea. 12 And I turned to see the voice which spoke with me; and having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in *the* midst of the lampstands *one* like to *the* Son of man, enclothed to the foot, and girded about the breasts with *a* golden girdle, 14 his head and hairs *were* white as white wool, as snow; and his eyes as *a* flame of fire; 15 and his feet like to burnished brass, as if *they* glowed in *a* furnace; and his voice as *a* voice of many waters; 16 and having in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth going forth *a* two-edged, sharp sword, and his appearance as the sun shines in his power. 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet, as dead; and he placed his right hand upon me, saying; Do not thou fear; I am the first and the last, 18 and the living *one;* and I became dead, and behold, I am alive to the aeons of the aeons; and have the keys of (the) death and of (the) Hades. 19 Write thou then, the things thou sawest, and the *things which* are, and the *things* which are about to take place after these; 20 the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest on my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars, are *the* angels of the seven churches; and the seven lampstands are *the* seven churches.

THE SEVEN LETTERS

2: 1 to 3: 22

The seven letters to the seven churches present the divine foreview of the earthly history of the church in three different aspects: first, in the apostolic time, this foreview having been fulfilled; second, in the seven-year period of the Antichrist, this foreview not yet having been fulfilled; and third, in and through the one time and the other, in the sense of a progressive movement and development from the first church to the last. In this last aspect the letters reveal outwardly an increase of growth and prosperity, but inwardly a steady spiritual decline, from the truth and fidelity of the Ephesian time to the apostasy and faithlessness of the Laodicean.

The First Letter — to Ephesus

2: 1–7

II. To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:
These *things* says the *one* holding the seven stars in his right *hand,* the *one* walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands; 2 I know thy works, and thy toil, and thy endurance, and that thou art not able to bear with evil *ones;* and thou hast tested those declaring themselves to be apostles, and they are not; and thou hast found them liars; 3 and thou hast endurance, and for the sake of his name thou hast labored and hast not wearied. 4 But I have against thee, that thou hast left thy first love. 5 Do thou remember therefore from whence thou hast fallen, and repent, and the first works do thou; but if not, I am coming to thee, and I will remove thy lamp-

stand out of its place, if thou dost not repent. 6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 The *one* having *an* ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches; To the *one* overcoming I will give to him to eat from the tree (or, wood) of (the) life, which is in the paradise of (the) God.

The Second Letter — to Smyrna

2: 8–11

8 And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

These *things* says the first and the last, who became dead and is alive; 9 I know thy tribulation, and the poverty; but thou art rich; and the blasphemy from the *ones* declaring themselves to be Jews, and are not, but *a* synagogue of (the) Satan. 10 Do not fear at all the things *which* thou art about to suffer; behold, the Devil is about to cast *some* from among you into prison, so that you may be tested; and you will have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful till death, and I will give to thee the crown of (the) life. 11 The *one* having *an* ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches: The *one* overcoming may in no wise be injured by the death, the second.

The Third Letter — to Pergamum

2: 12–17

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

These *things* says the *one* having the sword, the two-edged, the sharp; 13 I know where thou dwellest, where the throne of (the) Satan *is;* and thou holdest fast my name and thou didst not deny my faith even in the days in which Antipas *was* my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where (the) Satan dwells. 14 But I have *a*

few things against thee, because thou hast there *some* holding the teaching of Balaam, who taught (to the) Balak to cast *a* stumbling-block before the sons of Israel, to eat idol-sacrifices and to fornicate. 15 So thou also hast some holding the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner. 16 Repent, therefore; but if not, I am coming to thee speedily, and will war with them by the sword of my mouth. 17 The *one* having *an* ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches: To the *one* overcoming I will give of the hidden manna and will give to him *a* white stone, and on the stone *a* new name written, which no *one* knows but the *one* receiving.

The Fourth Letter — to Thyatira

2: 18–29

18 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These *things* says the Son of (the) God, the *one* having his eyes as *a* flame of fire, and his feet like to burnished brass; 19 I know thy works, and (the) love, and (the) faith, and (the) service, and thy endurance, and thy works, the last more than the first. 20 But I have *this* against thee that thou lettest alone the woman, Jezebel, the *one* calling herself *a* prophetess; and she teaches and seduces my bondmen to fornicate and to eat idol-sacrifices. 21 And I gave to her time, to the intent that she might repent, and she wills not to repent from her fornication; 22 Behold, I am casting her into *a* bed, and those committing adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent from her works; 23 and her children I will kill with death; and all the churches shall know that I am the *one* searching *the* reins and hearts; and I will give to you, to each *one* according to your works. 24 But to you I say, the remaining *ones,* the *ones* in

Thyatira, as many as hold not this teaching, who know not, as they say, the depths of (the) Satan; I am not laying on you other burden; 25 but what you have hold fast till I come. 26 And the *one* overcoming and the *one* guarding my works till the end, I will give to him authority over the nations; 27 and he will shepherd them with *an* iron rod, as the vessels of the potter are broken in pieces, as I also received from my Father; 28 and I will give to him the morning star. 29 The one having *an* ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The Fifth Letter — to Sardis

3: 1–6

III. And to the angel of the church in Sardis write:

These *things* says the *one* having the seven spirits of (the) God and the seven stars; I know thy works, that *a* name thou hast that thou livest, and dead thou art. 2 Become thou vigilant, and strengthen the *things* remaining which were about to die; for I have not found thy works completed in presence of my God. 3 Remember thou therefore how thou has received and didst hear, and observe and repent. If therefore thou wilt not watch, I will come as *a* thief, and thou wilt in no wise know what hour I shall come upon thee. 4 But thou hast *a* few names also in Sardis which soiled not their garments; and they will walk with me in white, because they are worthy. 5 The *one* overcoming, this *one* will array himself in white garments; and I will not in any wise blot his name out of the scroll of (the) life, and I will confess his name in presence of my Father, and in presence of his angels. 6 The one having *an* ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The Sixth Letter — to Philadelphia

3: 7–13

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:
These *things* says the holy, the true; the *one* having
the key of David; the *one* opening, and no one shuts; and
shuts, and no one opens; 8 I know thy works; behold, I
have placed before thee *an* opened door which no one has
power to shut; because thou hast *a* little power, and thou
hast kept my word, and thou hast not denied my name. 9
Behold, I give from out of the synagogue of (the) Satan,
the *ones* saying themselves to be Jews, and they are not,
but speak lies; behold, I will make them that they may
come and worship before thy feet, and may know that I
have loved thee. 10 Because thou hast guarded the word
of my patience, I also will keep thee from out of the
hour of the trial the *one which* is about to come on the
whole habitable world, to test the *ones* dwelling upon the
earth. 11 I come speedily; hold thou fast what thou hast,
so that no one may take thy crown. 12 The *one* over-
coming, I will make him *a* pillar in the inner temple of
my God, and he will in no wise go out any more; and I
will write on him the name of my God, and the name of
the city of my God, of the new Jerusalem that cometh
down out of the heaven from my God, and my new name.
13 The *one* having *an* ear, let him hear what the Spirit
says to the churches.

The Seventh Letter — to Laodicea

3: 14–22

14 And to the angel of the church of Laodicea write:
These *things* says the Amen, the faithful and true wit-
ness, the beginning of the creation of God; 15 I know thy

works, that neither cold thou art, nor hot; I wish thou wert cold or hot. 16 Thus, because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am about to spew thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have been enriched, and have not any need, and knowest not that thou art the wretched *one* and the pitiable *one,* and poor and blind and naked; 18 I counsel thee to buy from me gold refined by fire, so thou mayest become rich; and white garments, so that thou mayest array thyself, and the shame of thy nakedness may not appear; and eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, so that thou mayest see. 19 I, as many as I love, I rebuke and discipline; be thou zealous therefore and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hear my voice, and open the door, I will go in to him, and sup with him, and he with me. 21 The *one* overcoming, I will give to him to sit with me on my throne, as also I overcame, and am sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 The *one* having *an* ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

PERIOD II — THE SEVEN SEALS

4: 1 to 6: 17; 8: 1

The Introduction

4: 1 to 5: 14

This introduction has special relationship to the seal period, it lying within the first three and a half years of the reign of the Antichrist. It is the divine vision, from a heavenly point of view, of Christ, as the occupant of God's throne, as the Lamb who has prevailed to open the book of judgment and as the One who is worthy to re-

ceive all worship and praise. It is given for the warning, inspiring and solacing of the saints in preparation for coming days of persecution, temptation and sorrow.

IV. After these *things* I saw, and behold *a* door opened in the heaven, and the first voice which I heard *was* as of *a* trumpet speaking with me, saying: Come thou up here, and I will show to thee what *things* must come to pass after these. 2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, *a* throne was placed in the heaven, and on the throne *was one* sitting; 3 and the *one* sitting *was* like in appearance to *a* stone, *a* jasper and *a* sardius; and *a* rainbow *was* round about the throne like in appearance to an emerald. 4 And round about the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, arrayed with white garments, and on their heads golden crowns. 5 And from the throne go forth lightnings and voices and thunders; and seven lamps of fire *were* burning in presence of the throne, which are the seven spirits of (the) God; 6 and in presence of the throne *was a* glassy sea, like crystal; and in midst of the throne and around the throne, *were* four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the living creature, the first, *was* like *a* lion; and the second living creature *was* like *a* young bullock; and the third living creature had the face as *a* man; and the fourth living creature *was* like *a* flying eagle. 8 and the four living creatures, each for itself, had severally six wings; round about and within they are full of eyes; and they have not rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord (the) God (the) Almighty, the *one who* was and the *one* existing and the *one* coming. 9 And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the *one* sitting on the throne, to the *one*

living to the aeons of the aeons, 10 the twenty-four elders will fall down in presence of the *one* sitting on the throne, and they will do reverence to the *one* who lives to the aeons of the aeons, and they will cast their crowns in presence of the throne, saying: 11 Worthy thou art, our Lord and God to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because thou didst create (the) all *things,* and on account of thy will they were, and were created.

V. And I saw upon the right *hand* of the *one* sitting upon the throne *a* small scroll written within and on the back closely sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw *a* strong angel proclaiming in *a* great voice: Who is worthy to open the small scroll and to loose the seals of it? 3 And no one was able, in the heaven, nor on the earth, nor under the earth, to open the small scroll, nor to behold it. 4 And I was weeping much, because no one was found worthy to open the small scroll nor to behold it. 5 And one from the elders saith to me: Do not thou weep; behold the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the small scroll and its seven seals. 6 And I saw in midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in midst of the elders, *a* Lamb standing, as slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of (the) God, sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came and took the small scroll from out of the right *hand* of the *one* sitting on the throne.

8 And when he took the small scroll the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down in presence of the Lamb, having each *a* harp, and golden bowls, full of incenses, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang *a* new song, saying: Worthy thou art to receive the small scroll and to open the seals of it; because thou wast slain, and didst redeem *us* to (the) God with thy blood, from out of every tribe, and tongue, and people,

and nation; 10 and thou didst make them to our God *a* kingdom and priests, and they will reign on the earth.

11 And I saw, and I heard *a* voice of many angels, in *the* circle of the throne and of the living creatures and of the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads [or, ten thousands of ten thousands], and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with *a* great voice: Worthy is the Lamb, the *one* killed, to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. 13 And every creature which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and which is on the sea, and all the *things* in them, I heard saying, To the *one* sitting on the throne and to the Lamb, the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the might to the aeons of the aeons. 14 And the four living creatures said; Amen; and the elders fell down and did reverence.

THE SEAL PERIOD

6: 1 to 6: 17; 8: 1

The seven seals present the divine portrayal of certain earthly events connected with the person of the Antichrist. All of these are located within the first three and a half years of the reign of the Man of Sin, the first seal showing his rise at the beginning of the seven years, and the following seals portraying his continuance and development through the first half of this period. The first seal manifests Antichrist as a man of peace; the second seal, his development into a man of war; and the following seals, the famine, plague and death which result from his warlike activities. They also manifest the martyrdom of many saints in the midst of war and as a result

of it; and following this, they reveal certain heavenly portents, which betoken impending judgments upon the wicked.

The First Seal

6: 1, 2

VI. And I saw when the Lamb opened one from out of the seven seals, and I heard one from out of the four living creatures saying, as *a* voice of thunder, Come. 2 And I saw and behold *a* white horse, and the *one* sitting on him having *a* bow; and to him was given *a* crown, and he went forth conquering, and in order that he might conquer.

The Second Seal

6: 3, 4

3 And when he opened the seal, the second, I heard the second living creature saying, Come. 4 And *there* went forth another red horse; and to the *one* sitting on him it was given to him to take the peace from the earth, and in order that they might kill each other; and to him was given *a* great sword.

The Third Seal

6: 5, 6

5 And when he opened the seal, the third, I heard the third living creature saying, Come. And I saw and behold *a* black horse, and the *one* sitting on him having *a* balance in his hand. 6 And I heard *a* voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying; *a* choenix [or, measure] of wheat for *a* denarius [or, shilling] and three choenixes

[or, measures] of barley for *a* denarius [or, shilling]; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not.

The Fourth Seal

6: 7, 8

7 And when he opened the seal, the fourth, I heard *the* voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come. 8 And I saw and behold *a* pale horse, and the *one* sitting on him, *a* name to him (the) Death; and (the) Hades followed with him; and to them was given authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

The Fifth Seal

6: 9–11

9 And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those killed on account of the word of (the) God, and on account of the witnessing which they held; 10 And they cried with *a* great voice, saying, How long, the Despot [or, ruler], the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge the blood of us from the *ones* dwelling on the earth? 11 And *there* was given to each *a* white robe, and it was said to them, that they should rest yet *a* little time, till also their fellow-bondmen and their brethren should be completed, the *ones* about to be killed as also they.

The Sixth Seal

6: 12–17

12 And I saw when he opened the seal, the sixth, and *there* was *a* great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair; and the whole moon became as blood;

13 and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as *a* fig-tree casts her unripe figs, being shaken by *a* great wind; 14 and the heaven was rent apart, as *a* scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island were removed from out of their places; 15 and the kings of the earth, and the great, and the commanders, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall upon us, and hide us from *the* face of the *one* sitting upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 because the day, the great, of his wrath has come; and who is able to stand?

NOTE: The seventh seal is found in the trumpet period, at 8: 1.

PERIOD III — THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

7: 1 to 9: 21; 11: 15

THE INTRODUCTION

7: 1 to 8: 6

This introduction has special relationship to the trumpet period, the first six trumpets sounding in the latter part of the first three and a half years of the reign of the Antichrist and the seventh trumpet at the beginning of the last three and a half years. The introduction reveals the gracious provision made by God in behalf of certain saints in preparation for persecution and suffering (7: 1–8), the glorious prospect of heavenly rest and rewarding which is in store for such saints as suffer unto death (7: 9–17) and the fact that

the prayers of the saints on earth are the effective means in God's hands in bringing to pass His judgments upon wicked men (8:1–5).

After this I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth so that *a* wind might not blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor upon any tree. 2 And I saw another angel rising up from *the* rising of *the* sun, having *the* seal of *the* living God; and he cried with *a* great voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to them to injure the earth and the sea, 3 saying, Do not injure the earth, or the sea, or the trees, until we have sealed the bondmen of our God upon their foreheads. 4 And I heard the number of the sealed, one hundred forty-four thousand sealed, from out of every tribe of *the* sons of Israel; 5 from out of *the* tribe of Judah, twelve thousand sealed; from out of *the* tribe of Reuben, twelve thousand; from out of *the* tribe of Gad, twelve thousand; 6 from out of *the* tribe of Aser, twelve thousand; from out of *the* tribe of Napthali, twelve thousand; from out of *the* tribe of Manasses, twelve thousand; 7 from out of *the* tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand; from out of *the* tribe of Levi, twelve thousand; from out of *the* tribe of Issachar, twelve thousand; 8 from out of *the* tribe of Zebulum, twelve thousand; from out of *the* tribe of Joseph, twelve thousand; from out of *the* tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand, sealed.

9 After these *things* I saw and behold *a* great throng, which to number it no one was able, from out of every nation, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing in presence of the throne and in presence of the Lamb, arrayed *with* white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 and they cry, with *a* great voice, saying, The salvation *be* to our God, to the *one* sitting upon the throne, and to the

Lamb. 11 And all the angels stood in *the* circle of the throne and of the elders and of the four living creatures, and fell down in presence of the throne, upon their faces, and worshipped (the) God, 12 saying, Amen; the blessing, and the glory, and the wisdom, and the thanksgiving, and the honor, and the power, and the strength *be* to our God, to the aeons of the aeons; amen.

13 And answered one from the elders, saying to me, These the *ones* arrayed *with* the robes, the white, who are they, and whence came they? 14 And I said to him, O my lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are the *ones* coming out of the tribulation, the great, and they washed their robes, and whitened them in the blood of the Lamb. 15 On account of this they are in presence of the throne of (the) God, and minister to him day and night in his inner temple; and the *one* sitting upon the throne will tabernacle over them; 16 they will not hunger any more, neither will they thirst any more, nor will in any way the sun fall upon them, nor any heat; 17 because the Lamb, the *one* in midst of the throne, will shepherd them, and will lead them to fountains of waters of life; and (the) God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

VIII. And when he opened the seal, the seventh, silence was in the heaven about half *an* hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels, the *ones who* stand in presence of (the) God; and *there* was given to them seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came, and stood at the altar, having *a* golden censer; and *there* was given to him many incenses, in order that he might give *them* for the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar, the *one which is* in presence of the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incenses went up for the prayers of the saints from out of *the* hand of the angel, in presence of (the) God. 5 And the angel took the

censer, and filled it from out of the fire of the altar, and cast *it* unto the earth; and *there* were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and *an* earthquake.

6 And the seven angels, the *ones* having the seven trumpets, prepared themselves so that they might sound.

THE TRUMPET PERIOD

8: 7 to 9: 21; 11: 15–19

The first six trumpets, sounding toward the close of the first three and a half years of the reign of the Antichrist, bring to pass the preliminary judgments which fall upon the Man of Sin and his followers, these — as implied by the foregoing introduction — involving, though not as judgments, the saints in suffering and death, and leading the wicked, not to divinely purposed repentence, but to further sin in blaspheming the God of heaven. The seventh trumpet sounds later (11: 15–19), at the beginning of the second three and a half years, and ushers in the greater judgments which are then sent upon the Antichrist and his followers.

The First Trumpet

8: 7

And the first angel sounded, and *there* was hail, and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third of the earth was burnt up, and the third of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

The Second Trumpet

8: 8, 9

And the second angel sounded, and, as it were *a* great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea; and the third of the sea became blood; 9 and the third of the creatures the *ones* in the sea died, the *ones* having souls; and the third of the ships was destroyed.

The Third Trumpet

8: 10, 11

And the third angel sounded, and *a* great star fell from the heaven, burning as *a* lamp, and it fell upon the third of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters. 11 And the name of the star is called, The Wormwood; and the third of the waters was turned into wormwood; and many of the men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

The Fourth Trumpet

8: 12, 13

And the fourth angel sounded, and the third of the sun was smitten, and the third of the moon, and the third of the stars, so that the third of them might be darkened, and the day might not shine, the third of itself, and the night likewise. 13 And I saw, and I heard one eagle flying in mid heaven, saying *with a* great voice, Woe, woe, woe to those dwelling upon the earth, from out of the remaining sounds of the trumpet of the three angels, the *ones* about to sound.

The Fifth Trumpet

9: 1–12

IX. And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw *a* star from the heaven, fallen to the earth, and to him was given the key to the pit of the abyss; 2 and he opened the pit of the abyss, and *a* smoke went up from out of the pit as *a* smoke of *a* great furnace, and the sun was darkened, and the air, from the smoke of the pit. 3 And from out of the smoke went forth locusts into the earth, and authority was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have authority; 4 and it was said to them, that they should not injure the grass of the earth, nor any green *thing*, nor any tree, but only the men who have not the seal of (the) God upon their foreheads; 5 and it was given to them that they might not kill them, but that they might be tortured five months; and their torture *was* as *a* torture of *a* scorpion when it may strike *a* man. 6 And in those days the men will seek (the) death, and in no wise will find it; and they will desire to die, and (the) death will flee from them. 7 And the forms of the locusts *are* like to horses prepared for war; and upon the heads of them as crowns like to gold; and the faces of them as faces of men; 8 and they had hairs as hairs of women; and the teeth of them were as of lions; 9 and they had breastplates as breastplates of iron; and the sound of the wings of them as *a* sound of chariots of many horses, rushing into battle; 10 and they have tails like to scorpions; and stings; and in the tails of them *is* the authority of them to injure the men five months. 11 They have over them *a* king, the angel of the abyss; *a* name to him in Hebrew, Abaddon; and in the Greek he has *a* name, Apollyon. 12 The one woe is passed away; behold, two more woes come after these.

The Sixth Trumpet

9: 13–21

And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard one voice from
the four horns of the golden altar, which *is* in presence
of (the) God, 14 saying to the sixth angel, the *one* having
the trumpet: Loose the four angels, the *ones* bound by the
great, the river, Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were
loosed, the *ones* prepared for the hour and day, and month
and year, so that they should kill the third of the men.
16 And the number of the armies of the horsemen *was*
twice myriads of myriads, [or, ten thousands of ten thou-
sands]; I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw
the horses in the vision and the *ones* sitting upon them,
having breastplates, of fire, and of hyacinth, and of brim-
stone; and the heads of the horses *were* as heads of lions;
and from out of the mouths of them go forth fire, and
smoke, and brimstone. 18 Because of these three plagues
were killed the third of the men; by the fire, and the
smoke, and the brimstone, that going forth from out of
their mouths: 19 for the authority of the horses is in their
mouth; and in their tails; for their tails *are* like serpents,
having heads; and with them they injure. 20 And the
remaining *ones* of the men, the *ones who* were not killed
by these plagues did not repent from the works of their
hands, so that they should not worship the demons, and
the idols, the golden, and the silver, and the brazen, and
the stone, and the wooden, which are neither able to see,
nor to hear, nor to walk; 21 and *they* did not repent from
their murders, nor from their sorceries, nor from their
fornication, nor from their thefts.

Note: The seventh trumpet is found in the vial period, at 11: 15.

PERIOD IV — THE SEVEN THUNDERS

10: 1–11

The Introduction

10: 1–3

This introduction has special relationship to the thunder period, which is under the sixth trumpet and stands midway between the first and second three and a half years of the reign of the Antichrist. It is the vision of an angel who has the appearance and authority of Christ, this being in sign of the glory and power of Him who is about to come. The purpose of the vision is to keep the hearts of the saints fixed and quieted even during judgment-days, as a result of their being assured that all authority has been given unto Christ both in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28: 18).

X. And I saw another powerful angel, coming down from out of the heaven, arrayed *with a* cloud, and the rainbow upon his head, and his face as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; 2 and having in his hand *a* little scroll opened; and he placed his foot, the right, upon the sea, and the left, upon the land; 3 and he cried with *a* great voice, even as *a* lion roars. And when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices.

THE THUNDER PERIOD

10: 4

The voices of the seven thunders are divinely sealed, so that no one may know what they portend. The most that may be surmised is that they betoken forthcoming and increasingly terrible judgments. Their sounding, being under the sixth trumpet, lies at the end of the first and at the beginning of the second three and a half years of the reign of the Antichrist. They stand, therefore, at the middle of the prophetic "week" (Dan. 9: 27), and look forward to the last three and a half years and thus to the consummation of the age. That the church is on earth during this period is evidenced by the wording of the conclusion (10: 7; see the Analysis).

4 And when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; and I heard *a* voice from out the heaven saying, Seal thou up what the seven thunders uttered and write them not.

The Conclusion

10: 5–11

This conclusion has special application to the thunder period, which is midway between the close of the first and the commencement of the second three and a half years of the reign of the Antichrist. It repeats the vision of the foregoing introduction, showing the angel who represents Christ. Its purpose is to make plain to the saints that the last period of earthly testing and suffer-

ing has now come, this being the second three and a half years of the Antichrist's reign, and that it is to be, as set forth by John's eating the little book, a time of wide witnessing under stress of much persecution.

5 And the angel, whom I saw standing upon the sea and upon the land, lifted up his hand, the right, toward the heaven: 6 and he swore by the *one* living to the aeons of the aeons, who created the heaven and the *things* in it, and the earth and the *things* in it, and the sea and the *things* in it, that delay shall be no longer. 7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of (the) God, as he gave good tidings to his bondmen, the prophets.

8 And the voice which I heard from out of the heaven, *was* again speaking with me, and saying, Go thou, take thou the little scroll, the *one* opened in the hand of the angel, the *one who* stands upon the sea and upon the land. 9 And I went to the angel, saying to him to give to me the little scroll. And he says to me, Take thou and eat thou it; and it will make bitter thy belly, but in thy mouth it will be sweet as honey. 10 And I took the little scroll from out of the hand of the angel and ate it; and it was in my mouth as sweet honey; and when I ate it, my belly was made bitter. 11 And they say to me, it is necessary for thee again to prophesy, over [or, against] many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

PERIOD V — THE SEVEN VIALS

11: 1 to 16: 21

The Introduction

11: 1 to 15: 8

This introduction has application to the vial period, which lies within the second three and a half years of the reign of the Antichrist. A part of it — from the fourteenth chapter onward — has additional application to the judgment period, its prophecies looking through the one period, both to and into the other. Its object, expressed through several heavenly visions, is to give the saints to know that it is through many tribulations that they must enter the kingdom (Acts 14: 22, R.V.), but, additionally, that their enemies and persecutors, however much freedom in sin is allowed to them, are all foredoomed unto judgment and punishment. It is to be noted that the fourteenth chapter is a foreview of the nineteenth, that is, of the coming of Christ for and with His saints.

XI. And *a* reed was given to me like unto *a* rod, *one* saying, Rise thou and measure the inner temple of (the) God, and the altar, and the *ones* worshipping in it; 2 and the court, the *one* outside of the inner temple, do thou cast out and measure it not, because it was given to the nations; and the city, the holy, will they tread forty-two months. 3 And I will give to my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy *a* thousand, two hundred, sixty days, arrayed *with* sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive trees and the

two lampstands, the *ones* which stand in presence of the Lord of the earth. 5 And if anyone desires to injure them, fire goes forth from out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if anyone desires to injure them, thus it is necessary for him to be killed.

6 These have the authority to shut the heaven so that rain may not fall *in* the days of their prophecy; and they have authority over the waters, to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they will. 7 And when they will have finished their testimony, the wild-beast, the *one that* riseth from out of the abyss will make war with them, and will conquer them, and will kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will be in the street of the city, the great, which is called spiritually Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 And *some* from out of the peoples, and tribes, and tongues, and nations, behold their dead bodies three days and *a* half; and they do not suffer their dead bodies to be put into *a* tomb.

10 And the *ones* dwelling upon the earth rejoice over them, and make merry, and they will send gifts to each other, because these two prophets tortured the *ones* dwelling upon the earth. 11 And after the three days and *a* half, *the* breath of life from out (the) God entered into them; and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon the *ones* beholding them. 12 And they heard *a* great voice from out the heaven, saying to them, Come up hither. And they went up into the heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13 And in that hour was *a* great earthquake, and the tenth of the city fell, and in the earthquake were killed *the* names of men, seven thousand; and the remaining *ones* became affrighted, and they gave glory to the God of the heaven. 14 The woe, the

second, is passed away; behold, the woe, the third, comes speedily.

15 And the seventh angel sounded, and great voices were in the heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world is become *that* of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign to the aeons of the aeons. 16 And the twenty-four elders, the *ones* sitting in presence of (the) God upon their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped (the) God, 17 saying, We give thanks to thee, O Lord, (the) God, (the) Almighty, the *one* existing, and the *one who* was, because thou hast taken thy great power and didst reign. 18 And the nations were angry, and came thy wrath, and the time of the dead to be judged and to give the reward to thy bondmen, the prophets, and to the saints and to those fearing thy name, the small and the great, and to destroy those destroying the earth. 19 And the inner temple of (the) God was opened in the heaven, and the ark of his covenant was seen in his inner temple; and *there* were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and *an* earthquake, and great hail.

XII. And *a* great sign was seen in the heaven; *a* woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon underneath her feet, and upon her head *a* crown of twelve stars; 2 and, being with child, she cries out travailing and being tortured to bring forth. 3 And *there* was seen another sign in the heaven, and behold, *a* dragon, great, fiery red, having seven heads, and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems; 4 and his tail draws the third of the stars of the heaven, and he cast them to the earth. And the dragon stands in presence of the woman, the *one who* is about to bring forth, so that when she brings forth, he may devour her child. 5 And she brought forth *a* son, *a* male, who is about

to shepherd all the nations with *an* iron rod, and her child was caught up to (the) God and to his throne. 6 And the woman fled into the desert, where she has there *a* place prepared by (the) God, in order that there they might nourish her *a* thousand, two hundred, sixty days.

7 And war was in the heaven; (the) Michael and his angels warring with the dragon; and the dragon made war and his angels; 8 and he prevailed not, neither was their place found longer in the heaven. 9 And the dragon, the great, the serpent, the old, the *one* being called Devil and (The) Satan, the *one* deceiving the whole inhabited earth, was cast out into the earth; and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard *a* great voice in the heaven, saying, now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ; because the accuser of our brethren is cast out, the *one* accusing them in presence of our God day and night; 11 and they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their witness; and they loved not their life even unto death. 12 On account of this rejoice you heavens and the *ones* tabernacling in them. Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the Devil is gone down to you having great wrath, knowing that he has *a* short time.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast out into the earth, he persecuted the woman who brought forth the male *child*. 14 And *there* was given to the woman the two wings of the eagle, the great, so that she might fly into the desert, into her place, where she is nourished there, *a* time and times and half *a* time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out from his mouth after the woman water as *a* river, that he might make her *as one* carried away by *the* river. 16 And the earth helped

the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river, which the dragon cast out from his mouth. 17 And the dragon was enraged against the woman, and went away to make war with the remaining *ones* of her seed, the *ones* keeping the commandments of (the) God, and having the witness of Jesus.

XIII. And he stood upon the sand of the sea; and I saw *a* wild-beast coming up from out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and upon his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. 2 And the wild-beast, the *one which* I saw, was like to *a* leopard, and his feet as of *a* bear, and his mouth as *a* mouth of *a* lion. And the dragon gave to him his power, and his throne, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as if slain unto death; and the stroke of his death was healed. And the whole earth wondered after the wild-beast; 4 and they worshipped the dragon, because he had given the authority to the wild-beast, and they worshipped the wild-beast, saying, Who *is* like to the wild-beast? and who is able to make war with him? 5 And *there* was given to him *a* mouth speaking great *things* and blasphemies; and there was given to him authority to act forty-two months. 6 And he opened his mouth for blasphemy against (the) God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, the *ones* tabernacling in the heaven. 7 And it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and to him was given authority over every tribe, and people, and tongue and nation. 8 And all the *ones* dwelling on the earth will worship him, the name of whom is not written in the scroll of the life of the Lamb, the *one* slain from *the* founding of *the* world. 9 If anyone has *an* ear, let him hear. 10 If anyone be for captivity, into captivity he goeth; if anyone will kill with *a* sword,

it is necessary for him to be killed with *a* sword. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints.

11 And I saw another wild-beast coming up from out of the earth, and he had two horns, like *a* lamb, and he spoke as *a* dragon. 12 And all the authority of the first wild-beast he makes in presence of him; and he makes the earth and the *ones* dwelling in it that they should worship the wild-beast, the first, of whom the stroke of his death was healed; 13 and he makes great signs, that he should even make fire to come down from out the heaven into the earth, in presence of the men. 14 And he deceives the *ones* dwelling upon the earth, on account of the wonders which it was given to him to make in presence of the wild-beast, saying to the *ones* dwelling upon the earth, to make *an* image to the wild-beast, which has the stroke of the sword and lived. 15 And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the wild-beast, so that the image of the wild-beast should both speak, and should make as many as would not worship the image of the wild-beast that they should be killed. 16 And he makes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the bondmen, that they should give to them *a* mark upon their right hand or upon their forehead; 17 and that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the *one* having the mark, the name of the wild-beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is the wisdom; the *one* having *a* mind, let him compute the number of the wild-beast; for it is *a* number of *a* man; and the number of him *is* six hundred *and* sixty-six.

XIV. And I saw, and behold the Lamb, standing upon the mount Sion, and with him *a* hundred forty-four thousand, having his name and the name of his Father written upon their foreheads. 2 And I heard *a* voice from out of the heaven as *a* voice of many waters, and as *a* voice of

great thunder; and the voice which I heard *was* as of harpers harping upon their harps. 3 And they sing *a* new song in presence of the throne, and in presence of the four living creatures, and of the elders; and no one was able to learn the song, except the hundred forty-four thousand, the *ones* redeemed from the earth. 4 These are the *ones who* were not defiled with women, for they are virgins; these *are* the *ones* following the Lamb wherever he may go; these were redeemed from the men, *a* first-fruit to (the) God and to the Lamb; 5 and falsehood was not found in their mouth; for they are without blemish.

6 And I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven, having aeonian good-tidings to proclaim to the *ones* dwelling upon the earth, and to every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people; 7 saying with *a* great voice, Fear you (the) God and give glory to him, because the hour of his judgment has come; and worship the *one* having made the heaven, and the earth, and *the* sea, and *the* fountains of waters.

8 And another, *a* second angel followed, saying, Fallen, fallen, *is* Babylon, the great; the *one which* has given all the nations to drink from out of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And another angel, *a* third, followed them, saying with *a* great voice, If anyone worships the wild-beast and his image, and receives *a* mark upon his forehead, or upon his hand, 10 he also shall drink from out of the wine of the indignation of (the) God, the *one which* is mingled unmixed in the cup of his wrath, and he shall be tortured in fire and brimstone in presence of *the* holy angels and in presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torture rises up to aeons of aeons; and they have not rest day and night, the *ones* worshipping the wild-beast and his image, and if anyone receives the mark of his name. 12 Here is the endurance of the saints, the *ones* keeping the com-

mandments of (the) God and the faith of Jesus. 13 And I heard *a* voice from out of the heaven saying, Write thou, Blessed the dead, the *ones* dying in *the* Lord, from henceforth; yea, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them.

14 And I saw, and behold, *a* white cloud, and sitting upon the cloud *one* like *a* Son of man, having upon his head *a* golden crown, and in his hand *a* sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came forth from out of the inner temple crying with *a* great voice to the *one* sitting upon the cloud, Thrust thou in thy sickle, and reap, because the hour to reap is come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16 And the *one* sitting upon the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came forth from out of the inner temple, the *one which* is in the heaven, he also having *a* sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came forth from out of the altar, the *one* having authority over the fire; and he called *with a* great voice to the *one* having the sickle, the sharp, saying, Send thou thy sickle, the sharp, and gather thou the clusters of the vine of the earth, because her grapes are matured; 19 and the angel cast his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth and cast it into the winepress of the wrath of (the) God, the great. 20 And the winepress was trodden outside of the city, and blood came from out of the winepress, even to the bridles of the horses, as far as *a* thousand, six hundred furlongs.

XV. And I saw another sign in the heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having seven plagues, the last *ones,* because in them is finished the wrath of (the) God. 2 And I saw as *it were a* glassy sea, mingled *with* fire, and the *ones* being overcomers of the wild-beast and of his image and of the number of his name, standing upon the

sea, the glassy, having harps of (the) God. 3 And they sing the song of Moses, the bondman of (the) God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous *are* thy works, O Lord, (the) God, (the) Almighty, just and true *are* thy ways, the king of the nations; 4 who will not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? because *thou* alone *art* holy; because all the nations will come and worship in thy presence, because thy righteous deeds have been made manifest.

5 And after these *things* I saw, and the inner temple of the tabernacle of the witness was opened in the heaven. 6 And there came forth the seven angels, the *ones* having the seven plagues, from out of the inner temple, enclothed *with* linen, pure, bright, and girded about the breasts *with* golden girdles. 7 And one from out the four living-creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of (the) God, the *one* living to the aeons of the aeons. 8 And the inner temple was filled *with* smoke from out of the glory of (the) God and from out of his power; and no one was able to enter into the inner temple, until the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished.

XVI. And I heard *a* great voice from out of the inner temple, saying to the seven angels, Go you forth and pour out the seven vials of the wrath of (the) God into the earth.

THE VIAL PERIOD

16: 2–21

The seven vials are poured out during the second three and a half years of the reign of the Antichrist, this being proven by the fact that the foregoing introduction makes it clear that this

is the space of time, in connection with that person's activities, which will then remain to be fulfilled (11: 2, 3; 12: 6, 14). It is in this period that Antichrist obtains his world-dominion, reaches the climax of his blasphemies and carries on his greatest persecutions (13: 1–8; Matt. 24: 21, 22). But the outpouring of the vials brings to him and his followers preliminary judgments and prepares the way for their final judgment and destruction. That the church is on earth during this period is manifested by the conclusion of the last period and the introduction of this one (10: 7; 11: 3; 12: 6, 13–17; 13: 7–10; 14: 1–5, 14–16; 15: 2–4).

The First Vial

16: 2

2 And the first *angel* departed, and he poured out his vial upon the earth; and *there* came *an* ulcer, evil and hurtful, upon the men, the *ones who* had the mark of the wild-beast, and the *ones who* worshipped his image.

The Second Vial

16: 3

3 And the second poured out his vial into the sea; and it became blood, as of *a* dead *one,* and every soul of life died, the *ones* in the sea.

The Third Vial

16: 4–7

4 And the third poured out his vial into the rivers, and the fountains of the waters; and they became blood. 5

And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art thou, the *one* existing, and the *one who* was, the Holy *One,* because these *things* thou hast judged; 6 because they poured out *the* blood of *the* saints and of prophets; and blood thou hast given to them to drink; worthy they are. 7 And I heard the altar saying, Yea, O Lord, (the) God, (the) Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments.

The Fourth Vial

16: 8, 9

8 And the fourth poured out his vial upon the sun; and *there* was given to him to burn the men in fire. 9 And the men were burned *with* great heat, and they blasphemed the name of (the) God, the *one* having the authority over these plagues; and they did not repent to give to him glory.

The Fifth Vial

16: 10, 11

10 And the fifth poured out his vial upon the throne of the wild-beast. And his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain; 11 and they blasphemed the God of the heaven because of their pains, and because of their ulcers; and they repented not from their works.

The Sixth Vial

16: 12–16

12 And the sixth poured out his vial upon the river, the great, *the* Euphrates; and the water of it was dried up, so that the way of the kings, the *ones* from *the* sun-rising, might be prepared. 13 And I saw, coming from out of the

mouth of the dragon, and from out of the mouth of the wild-beast, and from out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits as frogs. 14 For they are spirits of demons working signs; which go forth to the kings of the whole inhabited earth, to gather them for the war of the day, the great, of (the) God, (the) Almighty. 15 Behold, I come as *a* thief; blessed the *one* watching, and keeping his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And they gathered them together into the place, the *one which* is called in Hebrew, Harmagedon.

The Seventh Vial

16: 17–21

17 And the seventh poured out his vial upon the air; and *a* great voice came forth from out of the inner temple, from the throne, saying, It is done. 18 And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and there was *a* great earthquake, such as was not since *a* man was upon the earth, so vast *an* earthquake, so mighty. 19 And the city, the great, was *divided* into three parts; and the cities of the nations fell; and Babylon, the great, was remembered before (the) God, to give to her the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath; 20 and every island fled away, and *the* mountains were not found; 21 and great hail, as if weighing *a* talent, comes down from out of the heaven upon the men; and the men blasphemed (the) God on account of the plague of the hail, because great is the plague of it, exceedingly.

PERIOD VI — THE JUDGMENT PERIOD

17: 1 to 20: 15

There is no separate introduction to the judgment period, this being found in the one which is connected with the vial period, which see.

THE JUDGMENT PERIOD

17: 1 to 20: 15

The seven judgments are cumulative and final in character. They deal with men, first in classes, and then, as individuals, progressing from the general to the particular, from the extensive to the intensive. It is to be noted that the judgment of the nations, while it begins at the end of this present age, is carried through the whole of the millennial age, Christ ruling throughout in righteousness and with a rod of iron and only finishing His judgments subsequent to the "little season" (20: 3, 7–9). The church is seen as still on earth in this period, up to the beginning of the nineteenth chapter (17: 5, 6; 18: 4, 20, 24).

The First Judgment

Babylon, mystical, representing Roman and all apostasy

17: 1–18

XVII. And *one* from out of the seven angels, the *ones* having the seven vials, came and spoke with me, saying, Come hither, I will show to thee the judgment of the

harlot, the great, the *one* sitting upon many waters; 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the *ones* inhabiting the earth were made drunk from the wine of her fornication. 3 And he carried me away in spirit into *a* desert; and I saw *a* woman sitting upon *a* scarlet wild-beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads, and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed *with* purple and scarlet, and bedecked *with* gold and precious stone, and pearls, having *a* golden cup in her hand full of abominations, and the uncleanness of her fornication; 5 and upon her forehead *was a* name written, Mystery, Babylon, the great, the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth. 6 And I saw the woman drunk from the blood of the saints and from the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And I wondered, having seen her, *with a* great wonder.

7 And the angel said to me, Why didst thou wonder? I will tell to thee the mystery of the woman, and of the wild-beast, the *one* bearing her, the *one* having the seven heads and the ten horns: 8 The wild-beast which thou sawest, was, and is not, and is about to come up from out of the abyss, and is to go into destruction; and the *ones* dwelling upon the earth will wonder, the names of whom have not been written upon the scroll of (the) life from *the* founding of *the* world, when they see the wild-beast, that was, and is not, and will be present. 9 Here *is* the mind, the *one* having wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains, where the woman sits upon them; 10 and *there* are seven kings; the five have fallen, the one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, it is necessary for him to continue *a* short time. 11 And the wild-beast, the *one which* was, and is not, he also is *an* eighth, and is from out of the seven, and he goes into destruction. 12 And the ten horns, the *ones which* thou sawest, are ten kings.

who have received not yet *a* kingdom, but they receive authority as kings one hour with the wild-beast. 13 These have one purpose; and their power and authority they give to the wild-beast. 14 These will make war with the Lamb; and the Lamb will overcome them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and the *ones* with him *are* called and called out and faithful. 15 And he says to me, The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sits, are peoples, and throngs, and nations, and tongues. 16 And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the wild-beast, these will hate the harlot, and will make her deserted and naked, and will eat her flesh, and will burn her up in fire. 17 For (the) God hath put it into their hearts to do his purpose and to do one purpose, and to give their kingdom to the wild-beast, till the words of (the) God will be finished. 18 And the woman which thou sawest is the city, the great, the *one* having kingship over the kings of the earth.

The Second Judgment

Babylon, literal, representing international and godless commercialism

18: 1–24

XVIII. After these *things,* I saw another angel coming down from out of the heaven, having great authority; and the earth was brightened with his glory. 2 And he cried out in *a* strong voice, saying, Fallen, fallen, *is* Babylon, the great, and is become *a* dwelling place of demons, and *a* hold of every impure spirit, and *a* hold of every unclean and detestable bird; 3 because from out of the wine of the wrath of her fornication all the nations have fallen, and the kings of the earth have fornicated with her, and the merchants

of the earth waxed rich from the power of her wantonness.

4 And I heard another voice from out of the heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, in order that you may not have fellowship with her sins, and in order that you may not receive of her plagues; 5 because her sins have reached even to the heaven, and (the) God remembered her wrong doings. 6 Give you to her as she also gave, and double the double according to her works; in the cup which she mixed, do you mingle to her double; 7 as much as she glorified herself and lived voluptuously, so much give to her, torture and mourning. Because in her heart she says, I sit *a* queen, and am not *a* widow, and I shall in no wise see mourning; 8 on account of this in one day will come her plagues, death and mourning, and famine; and she will be burned up in fire, because strong *is the* Lord, (the) God, the *one who* judged her. 9 And the kings of the earth will weep and will wail over her, the *ones* having fornicated and having lived wantonly with her, when they see the smoke of her burning, 10 standing at *a* distance on account of the fear of her torture, saying, Woe, woe, the city, the great, Babylon, the city, the strong, because in one hour has come her judgment. 11 And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because their cargo no *one* buys any more; 12 cargo of gold, and of silver, and of precious stone, and of pearls, and of fine linen, and of purple, and of silk, and of scarlet, and all thyine wood, and every vessel of ivory, and every vessel of most precious wood, and of brass, and of iron, and of marble; 13 and cinnamon, and amomum [or, spice], and odors, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil; and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep, and of horses, and of chariots, and of bodies, and souls of men. 14 And the ripe fruits of the longing of thy soul are departed from thee, and all the sumptuous *things*, and the bright [or,

magnificent] *things* are perished from thee, and no longer in any wise will *men* find them. 15 The merchants of these *things*, the *ones* having waxed rich from her, will stand at *a* distance, because of the fear of her torture, weeping and mourning, 16 saying, Woe, woe, the city, the great, the *one* arrayed *with* fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and bedecked with gold and precious stones, and pearls; 17 because in *one* hour the so great wealth is laid waste. And every helmsman, and everyone to *a* place sailing, and seamen, and as many as work the sea, stood afar off, 18 and cried out seeing the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city is* like to the city, the great? 19 and they cast dust upon their heads, and cried out weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the city, the great, by which all the *ones* having the ships upon the sea waxed rich from her costliness, because in *one* hour she was laid waste. 20 Rejoice thou over her, O heaven, and the saints, and the apostles, and the prophets, because (the) God has judged your judgment upon her. 21 And *a* strong angel took up *a* stone, as *a* great millstone, and cast *it* into the sea, saying, Thus with violence will Babylon be cast down, the great city, and she will in no wise be found, any more. 22 And *a* voice of harpers, and of musicians, and of flute-players, and of trumpeters will in no wise be heard in thee, any more; and every artisan of every art will in no wise be found in thee any more; and *a* sound of *a* millstone will in no wise be heard in thee any more; 23 and *a* light of *a* lamp will in no wise shine in thee any more. And *a* voice of bridegroom and of bride will in no wise be heard in thee any more; because thy merchants were the great *ones* of the earth, because by thy sorcery all the nations were deceived. 24 And in her was found *the* blood of prophets and of saints, even of all the *ones* killed upon the earth.

The Third Judgment

The Saints

The coming of Christ for His saints, as foretold in 14: 1–13, is here described.

19: 1–10

XIX. After these *things*, I heard as *it were a* great voice of *a* large throng in the heaven, saying, Alleluia, the salvation, and the glory, and the power of our God; 2 because true and righteous *are* his judgments, because he has judged the harlot, the great, which corrupted the earth with her fornication, and has avenged the blood of his bondmen from her hand. 3 And *a* second time they have said, Alleluia; and her smoke goeth up to the aeons of the aeons. 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell, and worshipped (the) God, the *one* sitting upon the throne, saying, Amen, Alleluia. 5 And *a* voice from the throne came out, saying, Praise you our God, all his bondmen, the *ones* fearing him, the small and the great.

6 And I heard as *it were a* voice of *a* great throng, and as *a* voice of many waters, and as *a* voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia, because reigneth *the* Lord, our God, the Almighty. 7 Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and give the glory to him, because is come the marriage of the Lamb, and his wife has prepared herself. 8 And it was given to her, so that she might enclothe herself with fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. 9 And he says to me, Write thou; blessed the *ones* called unto the supper of the marriage of the Lamb. And he says to me, These are the true words of (the) God. 10 And I fell before the feet of him to worship him; and he says to me, Take heed not; I am thy

fellow-bondman, and of thy brethren, the *ones* having the witness of Jesus; to (the) God do thou give worship; for the witness of Jesus is the spirit of (the) prophecy.

The Fourth Judgment

The Antichrist and False Prophet

The coming of Christ with His saints, as foretold in 14: 14–20, is here described.

19: 11–20

11 And I saw the heaven opened, and behold, *a* white horse, and the *one* sitting upon him called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he judges and makes war; 12 and his eyes *are as a* flame of fire; and upon his head *are* many diadems; having *a* name written, the *one which* no *one* knows except himself; 13 and arrayed with *a* mantle dipped in blood; and his name is called, The Word of (the) God. 14 And the armies, the *ones* in the heaven, were following him upon white horses, clothed with fine linen, white, clean. 15 And from out his mouth goes forth *a* sharp sword, so that with it he may smite the nations; and he will shepherd them with *an* iron rod; and he treads the wine-press of the wine of the fury of the wrath of (the) God, of the Almighty. 16 And he has upon his mantle and upon his thigh *a* name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

17 And I saw one angel standing in the sun, and he cried with *a* great voice, saying to all the birds, the *ones* flying in mid heaven, Come you, be you gathered together for the supper, the great, of (the) God, 18 in order that you may eat *the* flesh of kings, and *the* flesh of commanders, and *the* flesh of strong *ones*, and *the* flesh of horses, and of the *ones* sitting upon them, and *the* flesh of all,

both freemen and bondmen, and small and great. 19 And I saw the wild-beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make (the) war with the *one* sitting upon the horse, and with his army. 20 And the wild-beast was seized, and with him the false prophet, the *one* having made the signs in his presence, by which he deceived the *ones* having received the mark of the wild-beast, and the *ones* worshipping his image; the two were cast living into the lake of the fire, the *one* burning with brimstone.

The Fifth Judgment

The Nations

19: 21 to 20: 1–9

21 And the remaining *ones* were killed with the sword of the *one* sitting upon the horse, the *sword which* went forth from out of his mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

XX. And I saw *an* angel coming down from out of the heaven, having the key of the abyss, and *a* great chain upon his hand. 2 And he laid hold upon the dragon, the serpent, the old, who is *the* Devil and (the) Satan; and he bound him *a* thousand years, 3 and he cast him into the abyss, and shut him up and sealed over him, in order that he might not deceive longer the nations, till the thousand years should be finished; after these *things* it is necessary for him to be loosed *a* short space.

4 And I saw thrones; and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them; and the souls of the *ones* beheaded because of the witness of Jesus, and because of the word of (the) God, and those who worshipped not the wild-beast, nor his image, and received not the mark upon

their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived and reigned with (the) Christ, *the* thousand years; 5 the remaining *ones* of the dead lived not till the thousand years were finished. This *is* the resurrection, the first. 6 Blessed and holy the *one* having *a* share in the resurrection, the first; upon these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of (the) God, and of (the) Christ; and they will reign with him the thousand years. 7 And when the thousand years are finished, (the) Satan will be loosed from out of his prison; 8 and he will go forth to lead astray the nations, the *ones* in the four corners of the earth, (the) Gog and Magog, to gather them together unto the war, of whom the number *is* as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up upon the breadth of the earth, and encircled the camp of the saints, and the city, the beloved, and fire came down from out of the heaven and devoured them.

The Sixth Judgment

Satan and His Angels

20: 10

10 And the Devil, the *one* deceiving them, was cast into the lake of (the) fire and of brimstone, where both the wild-beast and the false prophet *are;* and they will be tortured day and night to the aeons of the aeons.

The Seventh Judgment

The Wicked Dead

20: 11–15

11 And I saw *a* throne, great, white, and the *one* sitting upon it, from *the* face of whom the earth and the heaven fled away; and *a* place was not found for them. 12 And I

saw the dead, the great and the small, standing in presence of the throne; and scrolls were opened; and another scroll was opened, the *one which* is of (the) life; and the dead were judged from out of the *things* written in the scrolls, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead, the *ones* in it; and (the) death and (the) Hades gave up the dead, the *ones* in them; and they were judged, every one, according to their works. 14 And (the) death and (the) Hades were cast into the lake of (the) fire; this is the death, the second. 15 And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of (the) life, *he* was cast into the lake of (the) fire.

PERIOD VII — THE SEVEN NEW-THINGS

21: 1 to 22: 5

There is no separate introduction to the New-Things period, the Spirit proceeding immediately to the description.

THE NEW-THINGS PERIOD

21: 1 to 22: 5

The seven New-Things look backward upon time and forward into eternity. They bring to pass and forever maintain the long looked-for experience when all suffering and sorrow are past, there being no more death, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain. This will be for the saints the experience of infinite rewarding and bliss, and also, that of infinitely holy and blessed service.

THE FIRST NEW-THING

The New Heaven

21: 1

XXI. And I saw *a* new heaven;

THE SECOND NEW-THING

The New Earth

21: 1

and *a* new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no longer.

THE THIRD NEW-THING

The New City

21: 2

2 And I saw the city, the holy, new Jerusalem, coming down from out of the heaven from (the) God, prepared as *a* bride adorned for her husband.

THE FOURTH NEW-THING

The New Tabernacle

21: 3

3 And I heard *a* great voice from out of the heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of (the) God *is* with (the) men;

THE FIFTH NEW-THING

The New Fellowship

21: 3

and he will tabernacle with them, and they will be his people; and (the) God himself will be with them.

The Sixth New-Thing

The New Experience

21: 4

4 And he will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and (the) death will be no longer; neither mourning, nor crying, nor pain will be longer, because the first *things* passed away.

The Seventh New-Thing

The New Prospect

21: 5–8

5 And the *one* sitting upon the throne said, Behold, I make all *things* new. And he says, Write thou; because these words are faithful and true. 6 And he said to me, They have come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the *one* thirsting from the fountain of the water of (the) life, freely; 7 the *one* overcoming will inherit these *things,* and I shall be to him God, and he will be to me *a* son. 8 But to the fearful, and faithless, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all the liars, their share *will be* in the lake, the *one which* burns with fire and brimstone, the *one which* is the death, the second.

The Description of the New City, Continued

21: 9 to 22: 5

9 And *one* from out of the seven angels, the *ones* having the seven vials, the *ones* being full of the seven plagues, the last, came and talked with me, saying Come thou, I will show to thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb. 10 And he carried me away in Spirit to *a* great and high mountain,

and he showed to me the city, the holy Jerusalem, coming down from out of the heaven from (the) God, 11 having the glory of (the) God, her luminary like *a* stone most precious, as *a* jasper stone, crystal-like; 12 having *a* wall, great and high, having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. 13 On *the* east, three gates; and on *the* north, three gates; and on *the* south, three gates; and on *the* west, three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and upon them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And the *one* talking with me had *a* measure, *a* golden reed, so that he might measure the city, and its gates, and its wall. 16 And the city lies four-cornered; and the length of it *is* as much as the breadth. And he measured the city *with* the reed unto twelve thousand stadia [or, furlongs]; the length and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. 17 And he measured the wall of it one hundred forty-four cubits, the measure of *a* man, the *one which* is of *an* angel. 18 And the structure of its wall *was* jasper; and the city was pure gold, like to pure glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city *were* adorned with every precious stone; the foundation, the first, jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; 20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; each one of the gates severally was of one pearl. And the plateau [or, broadplace] of the city *was* pure gold, as transparent glass. 22 And I saw no inner temple in it; for the Lord, (the) God, (the) Almighty, is *the* inner temple of it, and the Lamb. 23 And the city had no need of the sun, or of the moon, that they should shine *in* it; for the glory of (the) God

enlightened it, and the lamp of it *was* the Lamb. 24 And the nations will walk through the light of it; and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. 25 And gates of it will in no wise be shut by day, for no night will be there. 26 And they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 27 and anything common and the *one* making *an* abomination and *a* falsehood will in no wise enter into it; but only the *ones* written in the small scroll of (the) life of the Lamb.

XXII. And he showed to me *a* river of water of life, bright as crystal, going forth from out of the throne of (the) God and of the Lamb. 2 In *the* midst of its plateau [or, broad-place] and of the river, on this side and on that side, *is* a tree [or, wood] of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the trees [or, wood] *are* for *the* healing of the nations. 3 And any curse will not be longer; and the throne of (the) God and of the Lamb will be in it; and his bondmen will serve him. 4 And they will see his face; and his name *will be* upon their foreheads. 5 And night will be no longer; and they have no need of *the* light of *a* lamp, and of *the* light of *the* sun; because *the* Lord, (the) God will shine upon them; and they will reign to the aeons of the aeons.

THE THIRD SECTION

The General Conclusion

22: 6–21

This conclusion is general in character and is related to the whole book. It contains explanations (22: 6, 16), exhortations (22: 7, 12, 17, 19) and promises (22: 7, 12, 16, 20), and ends with the benediction of the apostle as from the risen, glorified and coming Christ (22: 21). The Revelation begins with the statement that it is written in order that the bondmen of Christ may know the things which must speedily come to pass (1: 1); it continues by making clear, amongst other things, the fact that service includes suffering and that witnessing may include martyrdom (1: 9; 2: 10; 3: 10; 6: 9–11; 7: 13, 14; 11: 7, 8; 12: 17; 13: 7; 17: 5, 6); and it now ends with the promise that Jesus will speedily return, and also with the implied assurance that His grace, till He comes, will be sufficient for all experiences (22: 20, 21). It is to be noted that the conclusion records the only prayer of the book and the last prayer of the Bible, which is, "Amen; come thou, Lord Jesus!" (22: 20).

6 And he said to me, These words *are* faithful and true; and the Lord, (the) God of the spirits of the prophets sent his angel to show to his bondmen the *things* which must come to pass in speed. **7** And, Behold, I come

speedily; blessed the *one* keeping the words of the prophecy of this small scroll. 8 And I, John, *was* the *one* hearing and seeing these *things;* and when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel, the *one* showing to me these *things.* 9 And he says to me, Take heed not; I am thy fellow-bondman, and of thy brethren, the prophets, and of the *ones* keeping the words of this small scroll; to (the) God give thou worship. 10 And he says to me, Seal thou not the words of the prophecy of this small scroll; for the time is nigh. 11 The *one* acting unjustly let him act unjustly still; and the *one* filthy, let him be made filthy still; and the *one* righteous, let him do righteousness still; and the *one* holy, let him be made holy still.

12 Behold, I come speedily, and my reward *is* with me, to render to each *one* as his work is. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. 14 Blessed the *ones* washing their robes, in order that their authority may be over the tree [or, wood] of (the) life, and may enter the gates into the city. 15 Outside, the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every *one* loving and making falsehood. 16 I Jesus, sent my angel to witness to you these *things* for the churches; I am the root and the offspring of David, the star, the bright, the morning. 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come thou; and the *one* hearing let him say, Come thou; and the *one* thirsting let him come, the *one* willing let him take *the* water of life freely. 18 I witness to everyone hearing the words of the prophecy of this small scroll; if any one shall add to them, (the) God will add to him the plagues, the *ones* written in this small scroll; 19 and if anyone shall take away from the words of the small scroll of this prophecy, (the) God will take away his share from the tree (or, wood) of (the)

life, and from out of the city, the holy, the *things* written in this small scroll. 20 The *one* witnessing these *things* says, Yea, I come speedily. Amen; come thou, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus *be* with *you* all.

THE EXPOSITION

1

The first and chief purpose of the Book of the Revelation is to reveal Jesus Christ, particularly as the One who was, who is and who is to come. This is stated in the divinely given title (1: 1), in the two declarations made by John and Christ (1: 4, 8) and in the explanation concerning prophecy given to John (19: 10). To miss, in studying the book, this chief purpose, however much one may gain otherwise, is to lose that which is essential; not to miss it, is to make the great discovery and to secure the supreme blessing (1: 1–3; 22: 6–9).

2

The second purpose of the Revelation is to reveal certain major things which concern eternity. This is done in two portions of the book; at the beginning (1: 1–8), and at the end (22: 6–21). In these parts Christ is shown to be the Lord God, the Almighty, the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (1: 8; 22: 13); and the saints are seen to be co-heirs with Him in His exaltation and glory (1: 4–6; 22: 11–14). The object of this part of the Revelation is to give to the saints an eternity-consciousness, in order that they may be lifted above the things of time, space and sense and so be prepared to endure and overcome through what remains of time-experience (1: 3; 22: 7, 12).

3

The third and last purpose of the Revelation is to reveal, both from a heavenly and earthly standpoint, the events

which are connected with the rise, progress, fall and judgment of the Antichrist, together with those things which grow out of the relationship which Jewish and Gentile saints have therewith. This portion of human experience was touched upon in the Old Testament (Dan. 9: 26, 27; 11: 21–45), and was more fully dwelt upon in the earlier parts of the New (Matt. 24; Mark 13: 1–37; Luke 17: 20–37; 21: 5–33; 2 Thess. 2: 1–10). But God chose to give the full revelation, by Christ and through John, in this last book of the Bible (1: 1, 4). The importance of the subject is found in the fact that God has ordained that the major portion of this most important book — from the beginning of chapter 6 to the end of chapter 19 — should be given up to this one theme; and it is further found in its very nature, the whole period being God's supreme earthly test of man's faith in Christ and also man's supreme earthly opportunity of declaring his love and devotion to Him.

4

The Revelation is divided into three sections (see the Analysis); the first section contains the general introduction (1: 1–8); the second, the seven periods (1: 9 to 22: 5); and the third, the general conclusion (22: 6–21).

5

The first and last sections, containing the general introduction and general conclusion (see the Analysis), are related to the book as a whole and are made up of explanations (1: 1, 7; 22: 6, 16), exhortations (1: 3; 22: 7–12), promises (1: 7; 22: 7, 12, 16, 20, 21) and benedictions (1: 3; 22: 21).

6

The middle section, containing the seven periods (see the Analysis), is divided into seven parts, the first five of these being named in the Revelation and the last two, while not named, being made clearly manifest. These parts are seven time-periods. The first, covers the whole seven years of the reign of the Antichrist; the following five, the successive years which lie within the seven years; and the last, the final time, which merges into eternity. The five intermediate periods as recorded are chronological, progressive and climactic. The themes of the time-period section are the gradual decadence of the professing church, the increase and final heading up of iniquity under the Antichrist, the coming of Christ for and with His saints, and God's preliminary and final judgments, the righteous being rewarded and the unrighteous being punished.

7

The seven time-periods of the middle section, separately considered, have, in two instances, neither an introduction nor conclusion; in five, have an introduction; and in one, have both an introduction and conclusion (see the Analysis). Where, in this section, there is either an introduction or conclusion, it is specially related to the time-period with which it is connected. In each case also, it is explanatory of the period, it being the divine portrayal, from a heavenly and spiritual standpoint, of its events. The purpose of the five introductions and one conclusion is to comfort and hearten the saints, by revealing God as above and superior to earth's occurrences, however untoward and threatening these may be; first, by showing that He is watching over and caring for His saints on earth and that He has a glorious heritage and rewarding for them in

heaven; and then, by manifesting the fact that, no matter how highly evil may exalt itself, it will finally and forever be overthrown and destroyed.

8

The first of the seven periods, namely, that of the seven letters to the seven churches (see the Analysis), describes both the inward and outward history of the professing church on earth. These letters are to be regarded as presenting three different views; first, the historic, the seven portraying actually, seven Asiatic churches which had existence in apostolic times, and thus representatively, the whole church of the apostolic period; second, the prophetic, the seven portraying the church as it will be found in the seven-year period of the Antichrist, in Asia and elsewhere; and third, the progressive, the seven portraying the course of the church in both of the above periods, from the beginning to the end, the first letter representing the commencement of the church in those periods and the last one its conclusion. Many interpreters also see in the seven letters a portrayal of the course of the church from Pentecost to the second advent. But such a deduction must be regarded, not as an interpretation, but rather as an application and parallelism. In this last aspect, the whole period may be divided somewhat as follows: the letter to Ephesus, from Pentecost to the end of the apostolic age (33–100 A.D.); the letter to Smyrna, from the beginning of the post-apostolic age to Constantine (100–311); the letter to Pergamum, from Constantine to Pope Gregory (311–590); the letter to Thyratira, from Pope Gregory to the Reformation (590–1517); the letter to Sardis, from the Reformation to modern missions (1517–1812); the letter to Philadelphia, from modern missions to the Antichrist (1812–date unrevealed);

and the letter to Laodicea, from the Antichrist to the second advent (seven years; dates unrevealed).

9

The last of the seven periods, namely, that of the seven new-things (see the Analysis), describes the things which end and then succeed earthly time, and which thus lie, finally, within eternity (21: 1–5). These are related to the new heaven and new earth (21: 1), when God is making all things new (21: 5). It is to be noted in this connection that what the first man Adam lost in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3: 22–24), the last Adam secures in the paradise of God (2: 7; 21: 22, 23); and what Eve was denied in the garden (Gen. 3: 6, 16), the wife fully and forever obtains in heaven (19: 7, 9; 22: 3–5). This period is that of the "ages of the ages," where each age enfolds the one which is coming and unfolds the one which is past. It is here that the divine trinity is merged into the divine unity, and God "is all in all" (1 Cor. 15: 24–28). And it is here that the church enters into, not only infinite glory, but also infinite activity, as kingly co-heirs with the eternally regnant Christ (22: 5).

10

The remaining five of the seven periods, lying between the first one and the last (see the Analysis), have to do with time-events. They are all connected — the historic aspect having been fulfilled and the prophetic alone remaining to be fulfilled — with the seven years which immediately precede the second advent, and thus with the person of the Antichrist. This last is the Man of Sin, who exalts himself above all that is called God (2 Thess. 2: 3, 4; Rev. 13: 1–6), who is the persecutor and destroyer of the saints

(Dan. 9: 26; Matt. 24: 15–21; Rev. 12: 15–17; 13: 5–7), and who is that destroyer who himself is finally destroyed (Dan. 9: 27; Rev. 19: 19, 20). The five periods, being connected with the Antichrist, have a Palestinian and Roman-world setting — like similar prophecies of Christ spoken in the days of His flesh (Matt. 24: 15–20; Mark 13: 1–37; Luke 17: 20–37; 21: 5–38) — their scenes being either within or around the Holy Land (7: 4; 10: 5; 11: 1, 2; 13: 1; 16: 16; 17: 9; 18: 1, 2). They gather their particular significance and importance from the fact that they involve the final, earthly destiny of the church, as represented by the Jewish and Gentile Christians referred to in the record.

11

In the original manuscript of the Revelation, so far as anyone knows, no title stood at the head of the book. But one was incorporated by the Holy Spirit in the text, this being given in the first words written (1: 1). This title reveals, at once, both the theme and purpose of the book, each being connected with the person of Christ, the theme having to do with Him as the ever existing One, and, therefore, as the One who was, is and is to come (1: 4, 7, 8), and the purpose having to do with our beholding this highly exalted One in His relationship to the righteous and wicked, to earth and heaven, and to time and eternity (1: 5–8, 11). In respect to this divinely given title, several things are to be noted: first, it has no definite article preceding it, as the Authorized Version and even the Revised would lead us to understand; nor is such to be supplied, for the book is not *The* Revelation, as if there were no other, but *A* Revelation, it being one among many; second, the word revelation is in the Greek, *apokalupsis*, which means, an uncovering or unveiling, and, in this sense,

a revelation; and lastly, the uncovering is not primarily of things, but of a person, which signifies, whatever things may appear in the revelation, that these are to be regarded through and in relationship with this person's personality. This last is an important matter, both in respect to the interpretation of the book and in regard to putting its precepts into practice, as the angel makes clear to John when, confusedly, he bows at his feet (19: 10).

12

The Greek word *tachos* ("shortly"), which is found at the beginning of the book (1: 1), which occurs in it — together with another cognate word, *tachu* — in many places (2: 5, 16; 3: 11; 11: 14; 22: 6, 7, 12, 20), and which appears — in the form *tachu* — finally and most importantly in the last chapter (22: 20), does not signify "shortly" or "quickly" in the sense of an immediate time, but rather, the one or the other, whenever the event prophesied shall take place, in the sense of haste or speed. In other words, it does not appear that the Spirit, by the use of the two words noted, intended to teach that the events of the Revelation, inclusive of the return of Christ, might take place in a day, a week, a month, a year or any immediate time — it is to be remembered that nearly two thousand years have passed since the book was written — but instead, that they should come to pass, whenever they should occur, with great rapidity. This is the sense in which the Greek words are used elsewhere in the Scripture (Luke 18: 8; Acts 12: 7; 22: 18; Matt. 28: 7, 8; Mark 16: 8; John 11: 29; 20: 4), and the only sense in which they may be made accordant with the historical facts in the case, namely, Christ's long delay and the equally long postponement of the events which are connected with His

return. For these reasons, it has seemed best, in translating the Greek words to which reference has been made, to use, not the usual words "shortly" and "quickly," but instead, "with speed" and "speedily," thus signifying the haste and rapidity with which the events described will finally be accomplished.

13

While the second and future coming of the Lord is divided into two parts, the coming for the saints (2 Thess. 2: 1; 1 Thess. 4: 13–17) and the coming with them (1 Thess. 3: 13; 2 Thess. 1: 10), it is not to be concluded that a long period of time is divinely set between these two portions, for if it were, there would be two future comings instead of one, which idea is contrary to the Scripture (Matt. 24: 29, 30; John 14: 2, 3; 1 Cor. 15: 51, 52; Heb. 9: 28; Rev. 1: 7). The Word states that there is but one coming in the future, namely, "the second" (John 14: 3; Heb. 9: 28), and hence, it implies that the process of it is not to be a divided and separate but a united and continuous one. For the same reason, the coming cannot be, as some teach, both premillennial and postmillennial, that is, first, a premillennial coming in the person of the Holy Spirit and for the purposes of salvation and sanctification, and second, a postmillennial coming in the person of Christ, for the purpose of resurrection, rapture, judgment and the bringing in of things eternal, for in this case, the premillennial advent would be the second one and the postmillennial a third one, which again is contrary to the Scripture (John 14: 3; Acts 1: 11; Heb. 9: 28). In other words, whatever one's prophetic view may be, it must have this scriptural characteristic, that it will be found in accordance with the Spirit's declaration to the effect that there are but two advents, the first in the past and the

second in the future; and also it must have this further scriptural characteristic, that it will present the thought, in respect to the second coming, of its being instantaneous in time and continuous in process (Matt. 24: 27–30; 1 Cor. 15: 51, 52).

14

The answer which is commonly made to the above reasoning is to the effect that distinctly different words are used in the Greek to signify Christ's coming for His saints and His coming with them, these words being, first, *parousia,* and second, *apokalupsis* and *epiphaneia.* It is declared that *parousia,* which means presence, implies the coming for, and that *apokalupsis,* which means disclosure, and *epiphaneia,* which means manifestation, signify the coming with. It is probable that such an etymological and scriptural distinction is to be recognized, the first word applying to the beginning of the advent and the other two words, to the ending of it. But the teaching which is based upon this distinction, to the effect that a considerable space of time must necessarily lie between the two events because they are described by different words, would be difficult to maintain. Indeed, the testimony of Scripture, in passages where the words occur, seem to point definitely in an opposite direction; for it is a fact that the same descriptive statements are made concerning each of the three words, as follows: *parousia,* Matt. 24: 3, 27, 37, 39; 1 Cor. 15: 23; 1 Thess. 2: 19; 3: 13; 4: 15; 5: 23; 2 Thess. 2: 1, 8; Jas. 5: 7, 8; 2 Pet. 1: 16; 3: 4, 12; 1 John 3: 28; *apokalupsis,* Rom. 8: 19; 1 Cor. 1: 7; Gal. 1: 12; 2 Thess. 1: 7; 1 Pet. 1: 7; 13: 4, 13; Rev. 1: 1; and *epiphaneia,* 2 Thess. 2: 8; 1 Tim. 6: 14; 2 Tim. 1: 10; 4: 1, 8; Titus 2: 13. This is a case, therefore, where we may conclude that the well known mathematical axiom, namely, that " things which are equal to the same thing, are equal to one another," has a scrip-

tural application; for, if two similar and connected events in Scripture are described by the same language, then we must conclude that the two are essentially one. The criticism noted, therefore, does not appear to fulfill its claim. Indeed, its opposite seems to be true, namely, that the words used indicate that the coming of Christ and His appearing are inseparably united in time. (See the Greek of 2 Thess. 2: 8, where *epiphaneia* and *parousia* are identified, both in time and event).

15

The above conclusions seem to forbid the thought held and presented by many premillennial teachers that the rapture of the saints at the coming of Christ will be a secret one. Such teachers say that the Lord, when He returns, will silently and unobservantly convey His people out of the world and into heaven, and that this will be done in such a hidden manner that persons on earth will not know that any remarkable event has occurred, except as they may surmise this through the absence of those who have been called away; they further declare that affairs on earth will go on then much as usual, except for the increase of iniquity, and this for, at least, the seven years of the Antichrist, until, at last, Christ returns with those whom before He took away, this portion of the coming to be visible and known to all the world. There is, of course, no objection to such a prophetic scheme, provided it has the support of Scripture. But this does not appear to be the case. For in each passage where a description is given of the events connected with the coming of Christ for and with His saints, there are details presented which suggest openness and not secrecy, manifestation and not concealment. In Matt. 24: 27 the coming is likened to a lightning flash

" which cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west." In 1 Cor. 15: 52, the advent is said to take place at the sounding of " the last trump." In 1 Thess. 4: 16 it is stated that the Lord, when He comes, will descend from heaven " with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." And here in Rev. 1: 7, it is declared, in connection with our being made kings and priests unto God and the Father, that Christ will come " with clouds," and that " every eye shall see him." There is no intimation in such phraseology that the advent is to take place in an unseen and unknown manner. The intimation, on the contrary, is that of visibility and publicity.

16

It is stated in the first chapter that the Revelation was given by Christ to John upon " the Lord's day " (1: 10); and it is generally taken for granted that this phrase signifies that John's experience took place upon the first day of the week. But it is doubtful if this was what the Spirit meant to imply by the use of the phrase. It is grammatically manifest that the words, the Lord's day, are only another form of the words, the day of the Lord, the chief difference between the two phrases in the Greek being one of verbal emphasis. It is evident, therefore, that the one phrase, scripturally speaking, is the equivalent of the other. Since this is the case, it follows that the meaning conveyed by the words, " the Lord's day," is to be found by considering the meaning which the Spirit has attached to the more frequently occurring words, " the day of the Lord." Approaching the subject from this standpoint, we find that that day is to be one of judgment (Isa. 2: 10–22; Zeph. 1: 7, 8), destruction (Isa. 13: 6–11; Joel 1: 15; 1 Thess. 5: 1–3), vengeance (Jer. 46: 10), wrath (Ezek. 7: 12–19),

battle (Ezek. 30: 1–4), darkness (Joel 2: 1–11; Amos 5: 18–20), roaring (Joel 3: 11–16), distress (Zeph. 1: 14–18), captivity (Zech. 14: 1, 2), apostasy (2 Thess. 2: 2–4), and burning (2 Pet. 3: 10–13). When now, one comes to consider the setting of these passages, one discovers that the day of the Lord, and thus also the Lord's day, is the day of God's vengeance upon sinful men, preparatory to His establishing millennial blessedness, and finally, the new heavens and earth. This brings us to the conclusion that Revelation 1: 10 signifies that John was brought into the Spirit in order that he might see, through visions and revelations, judgment-scenes which were to characterize the day of the Lord, and hence, in order, subsequently, that he might portray to the church the events of that period. The prophetic portion of the Revelation, therefore, has to do preeminently with the yet future Lord's day period of time, this period beginning with the revelation of the Antichrist (6: 1–8) and reaching its climax and end with his destruction (19: 11–21). In other words, the revelation first made, largely in the Old Testament and somewhat in the New, was to the effect that the day of vengeance would be the day of *Jehovah;* and the revelation now made, in this place alone, is to the effect that this day is *the day,* that is, one which, above all others, is important in respect to the interests and destinies of men. The Germans, unconsciously, anticipated prophetic truth and named their day of long planned battle against the nations and their anticipated conquest over them, "*Der Tag.*" But, in the real sense, The Day lies in the future; and it is none other than the day of God Almighty (Joel 3: 9–17; 2 Peter 3: 10–13). If the above reasoning concerning the "Lord's Day" is correct, it is to be noted that the historical view of prophecy — which makes the prophecies of the Revelation a progressive description of the events of the present dispensa-

tion — while it establishes interesting parallelisms, may not be recognized as a true interpretation, for in the case mentioned the Lord's day period is entirely a future one, namely, the seven years of the Antichrist.

17

The introduction to the first time period, namely, that of the seven letters, begins in the first chapter at the ninth verse and ends in the same chapter at the twentieth verse (1: 9–20; see the Analysis). A glance at this passage will reveal the fact that it contains and presents a vision of the ascended and glorified Christ (1: 12–16). It was a wonderful expression of divine compassion for this vision to be granted at this particular place. The Revelation contains many a long, dark and fearsome passage of prophesied earthly experience. But before these are seen, this unveiling of the heavenly, regnant Christ is given to us. Nothing could have been more comforting and heartening than this. To see Him who is invisible, under any circumstances, is to receive strength for endurance; and this is particularly true when the soul is hard pressed and great issues are at stake (Heb. 11: 27). It is to be kept in mind that the days in view will demand strength of a particular kind and in a special measure. Hence, the Lord makes much of the quality of endurance in His prophetic utterances (Matt. 24: 13; Mark 13: 13); and the Spirit does likewise in the letters to the seven churches (2: 7, 11, 17, 26; 3: 5, 12, 21), and at the close of the Revelation (21: 7). Here in this first chapter, therefore, Christ anticipates the need of the saints and seeks to fortify them against fear, discouragement and declension; and He does this in the most effective way possible by portraying Himself in all His beauty and majesty as Son of Man and Son

of God. Through the revelation given, He shows Himself to His saints as the One who is the High Priest of His people, who abides in the holiest place and who stands in the midst of the golden lampstands (1: 18–20); and by doing this, He gives to them strong assurance, whatever may take place, that He will never cease His tender watch and care over their lives. It is such a Christ as this who is over and in and through the whole of the Revelation. It is plain, then, that all that any saint will have to do in order to obtain victory, when the tribulation has come and its sorrows threaten to overwhelm, is to look up and "see Jesus," even as He is here revealed.

18

The second chapter begins the first time-period, namely, that of the seven letters; (see the Analysis). This period in its future aspect covers, as we believe, the time of the Antichrist, and presents certain peculiar features which will characterize that time. Amongst these features, it is to be noted that the salvation spoken of in the letters to the seven churches (2: 1 to 3: 22), as is the case in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew and the thirteenth of Mark, is set forth as being made dependent upon works. The promise in Matthew and Mark is given to the one who endures (Matt. 24: 13; Mark 13: 13); and the promises in the seven letters, to those who overcome (2: 7, 11, 17, 26; 3: 5, 12, 21). We may be sure that this fact does not imply that here work displaces faith, but rather, that it is supplementary to it and is the outward manifestation of it. Nevertheless, the spiritual teaching expressed by the emphasis which is thus laid upon work is most suggestive and important. The time in view is one of stress and strain, wherein men's souls will be tried as never in the past

(Matt. 24: 21, 22). False Christs will arise, claiming the worship of each and all, and false prophets will stand forth, pointing to paths of easy life and service in escape from tribulation and suffering (Matt. 24: 24; Rev. 13: 1–18). Thus the time will be one wherein great issues will hang in the balance in respect to what men will choose and do. Under these conditions, works will suddenly become all-important. Hence, it will come to pass that endurance and overcoming will be the efficient cause of "salvation," that is, spiritual deliverance from earthly evil. All this gives point to the word which occurs later in the Revelation: "They overcame him by blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." (12: 11).

19

If it is true that the seven letters to the seven churches (2: 1–3; 22) are to be regarded, in one aspect of the prophetic view, as setting forth the progressive history of the church on earth during the days of the Antichrist (see Paragraph 8), then it is a fact that all of the seven letters, when they will be in process of fulfillment, will have to run their full course before the Lord may come. It is necessarily the case, therefore, that the saints who will then be living will look for His return through the unfolding of the events of which the letters speak. It follows from this that the saints of these times will not be able to look momentarily for the return of Christ until the major portion of the prophecies of the letters has been fulfilled. These saints may regard the coming, during the whole of the period, as ever impending and rapidly nearing; but, manifestly, there is no possibility of their conceiving of it as an event which may take place at any instant until the time

of the last of the seven letters, namely, the Laodicean, has been reached. At that time, Christians will know that there is no other church period to follow, the Laodicean being the last; and thus in that era, they may look expectantly, confidently, and finally, momentarily for the appearing (2: 10, 16, 25; 3: 11, 20; Matt. 24: 32, 33; Luke 21: 28–32).

20

This view of the seven letters brings them into harmony with all other portions of Scripture which deal with the same subject; and, apparently, it is the only one which does. This is especially true of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, which may be considered as both the divine mould and explanation of all prophetic utterances. In this chapter, be it noted, Christ was speaking, not simply to Jews, but also to Christian Jews, that is, to those who were then believers and who, a little later at Pentecost, were to be baptized into the body of Christ, and who, as such, represented such Christians as should in the last days succeed and be like them; and it was to these that He said that they should see the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place (Matt. 24: 15); that they should experience "tribulation" and "great tribulation" (Matt. 24: 9, 21); that they should hear of false Christs (Matt. 24: 25); that they should see the sun darkened, the moon not giving its light and the stars falling from heaven (Matt. 24: 29); and finally, that they were to know, when they saw all these things, that Christ was at the doors (Matt. 24: 33). And it was to such disciples, who would have already seen such signs, and only to such, that He gave the command to watch momentarily (Matt. 24: 42–44; Mark 13: 33–37; Luke 21: 34–36). In other words, the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew

makes it plain — as do the thirteenth of Mark, the seventeenth of Luke, the twenty-first of Luke and the major portion of the book of the Revelation — that momentary watching may only become true when the prophesied events of Antichrist, tribulation and heavenly portents have been fulfilled. Up to that time, as set forth by Christ, Peter, James and Paul, the saints are exhorted constantly, but *patiently* to look upward and forward, waiting for the completion of God's purposes and through this, for the presence and appearing of the Lord (Luke 21: 19, 25–28; 2 Pet. 3: 8–15; 1 Thess. 1: 2, 3; Heb. 10: 23–25, 36, 37; Jas. 5: 7, 8). It is to be observed, in this connection, that there is not an exhortation in Paul's Epistles to look for Christ's advent as an event to be momentarily expected. Such exhortations are only found in the Gospels (Matt. 24: 42; Mark 13: 32–37; Luke 21: 36) and in the Revelation (16: 15); and in these places their application is one that is subsequent to the fulfillment of prophesied signs (Matt. 24: 29, 30; Mark 13: 26–29; Luke 21: 25–31; Rev. 16: 7–14).

21

In the light of the above statements, it is clear that the attitude of the New Testament saints in respect to the second coming of Christ is exactly what that of the Old Testament saints was in respect to the first. In the Old Testament period the following things were true: first, the time of the coming was known to God; second, its moment of fulfillment was pre-determined by Him; third, this time, being unrevealed, was not known to men; fourth, certain events, from time to time, were revealed which had to be brought to pass, and which, as they took place, became signs that the advent was drawing near; fifth, each generation of saints, in view of

no revelation to the contrary, could hope that these prophesied events would occur in its time; sixth, there came a generation, at last, which could confidently believe, because of recognized signs, that all intermediate events had been fulfilled, and hence, this generation could momentarily look for the advent; and finally, in the time known unto God from the beginning — what Paul calls the "fulness of time" (Gal. 4: 4) — the coming took place. And, statement by statement, it appears true that such is and will be the experience of the church as related to the second advent. It follows from this — the time of the coming being predetermined and fixed by God — that we may not, as is so often said in sermon and prayer, "hasten the coming of the Lord." We may hasten toward it, but not it toward us (2 Pet. 3: 12 R. V.). Our attitude then, is to be this; we are to occupy till Christ comes (Luke 19: 13), being assured that the "times and seasons" are in the authority of the Father (Acts 1: 7) and being certain that He will, "in his own times," show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6: 15). It is instructive to note, in connection with these thoughts, that the expression frequently used by premillennialists, namely, "If the Lord tarries," is not to be found in the Scripture. The scriptural phrase is, "If the Lord will" (Jas. 4: 13–15), which is a broader term and does not suggest immediacy in time.

22

It is to be kept in mind that the seven churches (2: 1 to 3: 21), while having a historical fulfillment, represent Christendom as it is to be during the last years of this dispensation, that is, during the seven year period of the Antichrist. With this in view, and also, with their pro-

gressive feature in mind, we may see, from the descriptions which the Holy Spirit gives, that the development which will then take place, will have two aspects, the outward and inward, and that these will be diametrically opposite to each other. Outwardly, the church will begin in poverty (2: 2, 9), and will end in wealth (3: 17); inwardly, it will begin in fidelity (2: 2), and end in apostasy (3: 15–18). All through, it is evident, there is a remnant of faithful and devoted souls, who love and will not deny their Lord (2: 2, 3; 3: 19–21). But the spiritual declension, in spite of carnal prosperity, is steady, and at last, it becomes complete. The final scene is pathetic beyond description: the Lord, who was seen in the first church, walking within it and rejoicing over the works, labor and patience of His people (2: 1–3), is seen in the last church, standing without, knocking upon the door, seeking entrance, calling, not to the church at large but to some given individual in it, and promising, if permitted, to come in and have fellowship with that "man," whoever he may be (3: 20). Those who have anointed eyes (3: 18) will not fail to discern that the course of the professing church, in present times, is setting in such a direction as is thus described. Wealth and intellectualism are doing their deadly work, and modernism is fast bringing to pass a condition of things, where, in a sad repetition of spiritual history, the children of God will be called upon to behold a temple magnifical, but with the Son of God standing without and saying, "Behold, *your* house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23: 38).

23

As an indication that the seven churches of the apostolic time did not altogether fulfill the prophecies of the letters addressed to them, and hence, that other churches of a

future time — and this time immediately preceding Christ's coming — must do this, the following facts are to be noted: First, there is no historical evidence that there was in the past a church at Thyatira, Tertullianus (160–230 A.D.) and Epiphanius (310–403 A.D) affirming that there was none; which, if it is true, means that this particular church must yet be established in order that the prophecy spoken of it may be brought to pass. Second, there is no proof, either in the Scripture or in the patristic writings, to the effect that all of the prophecies concerning the six remaining churches were fulfilled, that is, literally and in detail; which implies that the experiences prophesied in the letters to those churches are to have another and more exact fulfilment in the days to come. And third, it is manifest that certain divine warnings given in the letters to the churches, which were to be made effective if certain spiritual conditions were to remain, were never, in spite of the continuance of these conditions, brought to pass; which undoubtedly indicates that the warnings were given to the apostolic churches in a representative manner, that is, to them as representing other churches like them which should have existence at a later time and in such conditions as would make possible the bringing to pass of every warning which had been uttered. As an illustration of this last, the verses 2: 5, 16, 25; 3: 3, 11 may be cited. In these utterances, the churches were urged to hold fast what they had till Christ should come; were exhorted to repent lest He should come; and were warned, if they did not repent and hold fast, that He would come speedily and in punishment against them. The churches did not repent and hold fast, but declined steadily and utterly. And yet, Christ did not come, and His judgments did not fall. There can be but one explanation of these facts. It is not that Christ's warnings meant nothing; nor that He proved faith-

less to His word; it is this rather, that He was looking forward — as was the case when He uttered the prophecy of Matthew twenty-four — to a future time when similar conditions should exist and His warnings and pledged word would be wholly and exactly fulfilled.

24

The implication of the above is — and we do not shrink from this understanding of our words — that there is likely to be a readjustment in the Near East which will reëstablish old-time conditions in Asia Minor, both physically and ecclesiastically. If one had said this from a prophetic standpoint — as one did say it — twenty, or even ten years ago, there would have been little evidence of such a thing being brought to pass. But within the last five years the prophetical and historical lines have been rapidly converging, so that it is easier to believe now than it was before that great developments in the historic places of the Near East may yet take place. With the Turks largely driven back into Asia; with the Grecians pushing eastward; with the British holding open the water courses between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea; and with both the British and Americans, equipped with their limitless wealth and proverbial capability and activity, entering into all of these places for commercial purposes, it is not difficult to imagine that the old world is destined to become a new one. Ancient cities in Asia Minor may thus spring up, as it were, in a day and night; and instead of Smyrna being the only existing one of the seven cities spoken of in the Scripture, we may suddenly see the six others, rebuilt and revitalized, and with a greatness which the past never knew. In such a case, there may once more be within these cities seven churches, with the whole number fulfilling, at last,

all that the seven letters prophesied concerning them. It is to be remembered, however, that it is not necessary for these surmises to be brought to pass in order to fulfill what the seven letters foretell. They speak of a church which was, as representing a church which is to be; and in such a prophetic utterance the essential part of the matter is, not the physical setting, but the spiritual content. And whatever the physical outcome, this spiritual element will remain. It may be concluded, therefore, that the seven letters portray with accuracy the spiritual condition of the church in the last days; and also, it may be believed that, not only their promises, but also their warnings will then, literally and in detail, be accomplished.

25

The phrase in 3: 10, "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world," is reminiscent of the verse in Luke 21: 36. Each refers to the great tribulation; the same portion of it, that is, the close of the latter half; and the same spiritual experience in it, namely, of being kept, not from, but out of — in the sense of out of the midst of — the trials of that time. The word "from," in 3: 10 is not *apo* but *ek;* and the thought is that those who will guard the word of Christ's patience, or endurance (see the Literal Translation), will be given strength to overcome in the midst of the persecutions which are then taking place and which are to spread through the whole inhabited earth, this last phrase indicating that the time referred to is when the tribulation is about to reach its utmost intensity and extensity. It will be seen that this view is consistent with the progressive idea contained in the seven letters, which has been more than once referred to, the Philadelphian church being next to the last in the

series of churches (3: 7–13), the Laodicean being the last (3: 14–22), and the periods of the two churches bringing to pass the time when all things foretold will reach their climax; (3: 10; 11: 1–13).

26

The fourth and fifth chapters constitute the introduction to the second time-period, namely, that of the seven seals; (see the Analysis). They are to be read, in spite of the chapter division, as one, and are to be thus considered. This introduction presents a foreview of the period with which it is connected, that is, it looks upon and speaks about the things which are to come to pass during the seal period, and this, from a distinctly divine and heavenly standpoint. It thus gives us to see, not so much earthly movements — these being afterwards described under the successive seals — as those which are above the earth, though corresponding with the events upon the earth which are then taking place. The introduction, therefore, covers the seal period, but does not go beyond it. And what is true concerning this introduction, as related to its period, is true of the other introductions, as related to their periods. Thus it will be seen that the scheme of the whole book of the Revelation is one of introduction and then, of period; of heavenly view and then, of earthly; and, largely, of the spiritual and then, of the physical (see the Analysis).

27

As was the case with the general introduction (1: 1–8), so now it is with this special one (4: 1 to 5: 14). In the general introduction, there was a vision of Christ which related itself to the whole book. In this special one, there is a vision of Him as related to this particular period of the

book, namely, that of the seven seals (see the Analysis). And the purpose of each vision is the same. In respect to all of the seven periods, the Christian's need is to see a divine Watcher, standing in heaven and ruling over earth's events. In respect to the seal period, which describes the rise and progress of the Antichrist, the need is to see this Watcher seated upon His throne, receiving the adoration of all the heavenly host, and possessing the measureless power of deity (4: 2–11; 5: 9–14). As related to the seal period, it is to be kept in mind that the seven seals open the way to the revelation of the Antichrist, his devastating wars, the sufferings which this time will bring upon men, including Christians, and finally, God's preliminary judgments upon the workers of iniquity. The spiritual need of the saints of those days, therefore, will be to have the assurance that God's great High Priest is, not only amongst the golden lampstands and ever keeping their lights burning (1: 12, 20), but also, is enthroned in power as God over all (4: 1–3, 6–11; 5: 1–14). The introduction to the seven seals gives this. And because of it, the saints on earth, while the nations are being tossed to and fro in their distress like a surging sea, will be able, by faith and through this revelation, to look up, to see a throne, to discover that it is immovably settled upon a sea of glass, to behold One there who has about His throne a rainbow — betokening a covenanted peace for those who put their trust in Him (4: 2–6) — and thus to gaze upon the great Priest-King, blessedly ministrant and triumphantly regnant. What heart-rest, in troublous times, such a vision will give may be imagined!

28

Whatever the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders spoken of in the fourth and fifth chapters are, it is clear that they are not mere symbols (4: 4–11;

5: 8–10). They are, according to the Scripture, created beings, who have life, energy and power. As for the four living creatures, the Authorized Version has led to a misconception by using for them the name, "beasts," which word applies to the Antichrist and the false prophet (11: 7; 13: 1, 11; 16: 13; 17: 8; 19: 19; 20: 10), but not to these. The Revised Version has corrected this misnaming by using the words, "living creatures," and this term at once indicates the reality and activity of these beings. For other reasons, a similar conclusion may be reached concerning the four and twenty elders. All of these have their separate and individual positions before God; they are above the angels in place and power; and they are the servants of the divine will in many and special particulars. It is to be noticed, however, that the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders are not the same in their standing and relationship. One difference is that the living creatures are in the midst of the throne (4: 6), and the four and twenty elders are only about the throne (4: 4). In addition to this, the living creatures have larger powers than the four and twenty elders, they being the executors of God's will in a particular and exclusive sense (6: 1, 3, 5, 7; 15: 7). The two companies, however, are closely united in worship, each joining with the other in adoring God and in ascribing praise to Him and the Lamb (4: 6–11; 5: 7–10, 14; 11: 16–18). It appears, then, that the four living creatures have to do with God's governmental affairs (6: 1, 3, 5, 7; 7: 11; 14: 3; 15: 7), and also, that both they and the four and twenty elders represent the redeemed of all times and places (4: 9; 5: 6–10, 14; 19: 4–7). As to this last, some interpreters hold that the four and twenty elders stand for the Old Testament saints and the four living creatures for the New; while others hold that the four and twenty elders represent the church on earth and the four

living creatures, the church in heaven. As between these two interpretations, it is difficult to reach a positive conclusion, though not a little may be said in favor of the latter view.

29

It would seem, both from the standpoint of the Greek word used and from that of the description given, that the word "book," which occurs in 5: 7, should be translated and thought of, not as a modern volume, but as an ancient scroll. The word in the Greek is *biblion*. This is derived from the word *biblos*. This last word is properly the inner bark of the papyrus plant, from which the sheets for writing were made. The word *biblion*, therefore, presents, inherently, the idea of a papyrus book, which anciently was a roll or scroll. In addition, the book was sealed with seven seals (5: 1, 2). This suggests a scroll such as, at the time of John, was used in the law courts. It is to be observed that it is probable that the punctuation of the Authorized Version in 5: 1 is misleading. It reads there, "A book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals; which indicates that the writing of the book was within and without, and which does not specify where the seals were." It is likely that the punctuation should be, "A book written within; and on the backside sealed with seven seals"; which indicates that the writing of the book was within and that the seals were placed without. If the ancient custom of sealing was in mind, we may understand that the seven seals were placed equidistantly along the back and length of the roll, thus binding the whole together and hiding all of the writing within, and thus making it possible for the seals to be successively broken. There is much difference of opinion as to what the contents of the scroll were and what the whole scroll

symbolized. We judge, however, from what follows in chapters four and five and from parallel passages in the Old Testament, that the scroll contained a record of the forthcoming judgments of God, and that the whole signified, through these judgments, that the sovereignty of Christ and His redeemed saints was about to be established and maintained (4: 7–10; 5: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12). As related to the word "book", it is well to state that there are three Greek words in the Revelation which are translated by this word. The first of these is *biblos,* which means a scroll and is used in the following places: 3: 5; 13: 8; 17: 8; 20: 12, 15; 22: 19. The second is *biblion,* which is a diminutive of *biblos,* means a small scroll and is used in the following places: 1: 11; 5: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9; 21: 27; 22: 7, 9, 10, 18, 19. And the third is *bibliaridion,* which is a diminutive of *biblion,* means a little scroll, and is used in the following places: 10: 2, 8, 9, 10.

30

The word, "Lamb," which is introduced in the fifth and sixth chapter (5: 6, 8, 12; 6: 1, 16), is a most interesting one. There are three words in the Greek which signify a lamb; the first, *amnos,* the second, *arēn,* and the third, *arnion.* The first of these words is a primitive one, meaning simply a lamb, and is used in the New Testament four times (John 1: 29, 36; Acts 8: 32; 1 Pet. 1: 19); the second, means a male lamb, and is used once (Luke 10: 3); the third, is a diminutive of the second, meaning a little male lamb, or a lambkin, and is used thirty times (John 21: 15; Rev. 5: 6, 8, 12, 13; 6: 1, 16; 7: 9, 10, 14, 17; 12: 11; 13: 8, 11; 14: 1, 4, 4, 10; 15: 3; 17: 14, 14; 19: 7, 9; 21: 9, 14, 22, 23, 27; 22: 1, 3). It will be seen by the references last given that this lambkin word, with one exception, is only

found in the Revelation; and it will also be seen that in this book no other word for lamb finds place. There is, of course, a reason for this. And it seems to be found in connection with the following considerations. The Revelation sets forth Jesus as the coming One. All through its pages, He is manifested as the One who is about to enter into His recompense of glory, when He will be seen by " every eye " (1: 7), and will be acknowledged by " every tongue " (Phil. 2: 9–11; Rev. 15: 3; 17: 14; 19: 16). This is the joy which was set before Christ (Heb. 12: 2), and for which He has waited (1 Cor. 15: 25; Heb. 10: 13). Above all, it is the supremely anticipated rapture which God, the Father, has had in mind, when He will demonstrate beyond question and for all eternity the infinite fact that His Christ is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords (Heb. 1: 13; 1 Tim. 6: 15), and when He will crown Him with the glory and honor which are His most just due (Heb. 2: 9; 2 Thess. 1: 7–10; Rev. 19: 12). With such thoughts in mind the Holy Spirit, in writing the Revelation, evidently seeks for a word which will express what Christ is in the Father's view. And manifestly, He finds it in this diminutive word, *arnion,* or male lambkin. For the word signifies that Christ is the destined male head of the flock; that He is spotlessly clean and innocently righteous; that He became the Lion of the tribe of Judah by being the yielding, suffering and dying Lamb of God; and, in consequence, that He is and ever will be the Son of the Father's tender love. All this, and much more, is expressed by God calling Christ in this book of consummation and compensation His precious " lambkin."

31

It is a terrible commentary upon humankind, as evidenced by the fifth chapter, that only one man, the Man Christ Jesus, has ever been found worthy to execute judgment. All other men have been under judgment, and, therefore, have not been fitted to act as judges. This is the meaning of the word, " And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me; weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof " (5: 4, 5). The Lamb, and He alone then, may break the seven seals of the scroll which contains the judgments of God; and in the vision which follows the above words, He does so, one by one. When we think of Jesus, the Man, we think of Bethlehem, Galilee, Judea, and the hill outside of Jerusalem, remembering His humility, gentleness, grace and sacrifice, and it is difficult to conceive of Him as otherwise. But " this same Jesus " will yet sit on the throne of judgment; His eyes one day will flash with fire; and the word of the law will, at last, proceed out of His mouth. How surprised arrogant men, who have despised the Nazarene, will be in that day! There is no word in the Scripture more terrible than that which is found in Paul's sermon at Athens: " He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the *man* whom he hath ordained " (Acts 17: 31). Well did the Psalmist say, " Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, for his wrath will soon be kindled. Blessed are all they that take refuge in him " (Ps. 2: 12 R. V.).

32

There is a difference, as set forth in chapter four, between the praise given by the four living creatures and that offered by the four and twenty elders. In each case, the thanksgiving is presented in the presence of Christ, before the throne, in the spirit of worship, and for the purpose of glorifying the Holy Name (4: 8–11). But the four and twenty elders praise God for what He has done (4: 11), and the four living creatures, for what He is (4: 8). This distinction, we may well believe, is not an accident; and, not being this, it is highly significant. It is to be remembered that the four and twenty elders are near and about the throne, but not on it (4: 4); while the four living creatures are not only about the throne, but also in the midst of it (4: 6). In other words, however close the four and twenty elders are, the four living creatures are closer; and however high the four and twenty elders are, the four living creatures are higher. We may not know why, but the fact remains that God has given the four living creatures, as compared with the four and twenty elders, a peculiarly near and exalted position. And this, no doubt, is the explanation of the difference in the praise which is offered. It is a great thing to give God thanks for all His works, and thus to ascribe to Him "glory and honor and power" (4: 11). But it is a greater thing to offer Him the heart's adoration simply for what He is, and to worship Him in the unadorned and yet infinitely significant words, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (4: 8). And as a practical lesson from this, may we not discover here the secret why our praises often fail? If we thank God for what He does, the day we do not understand His will and way our praise is likely to die away. But if we thank Him for what He is,

whether or not we understand Him, we shall always praise Him, since He ever is, and his power and love never change. Let us remember, however, that one has to stand, spiritually speaking, not simply before the throne, but actually on it, to voice such unaffected and undying praise as this.

33

The "Hallelujah Chorus," in spite of Händel and great musical festivals, has never yet been sung. But it will be sung, in heaven. And here, in the fifth chapter, is the description of it, at the close of the introduction to the period of the seven seals (5: 8–14). God, according to the record, has announced in heaven that there is One who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose the seven seals thereof; and He has given the hosts in heaven to see a Lamb, having seven horns, betokening His perfect strength, and seven eyes, betokening His perfect wisdom; and thus the great discovery has been made that the Lion of the tribe of Judah is none other than the Lamb of Calvary's cross. At this, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fall down and worship, singing their new song, which is that of redeeming love; whereat myriads of angels take up the praise, the voice of thanksgiving spreading outward until it reaches the farthest ranks of the angelic company; whereupon, every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, cry out in the ecstasy of their adoration, ascribing blessing and honor and glory and power to Him who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever; at which, the living creatures say, Amen, and the four and twenty elders fall down and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever. Besides such a Hallelujah Chorus as this, earth's praise, at best, has been faint and almost a

discord. Nevertheless, it is for the saints to sing even now, as sweetly and as adoringly as they can. Having thus *practiced,* they may hope, one day, to join the chorus which is to be.

34

Most premillennial commentators upon the Revelation put the resurrection of the dead saints and the translation of the living ones at the beginning of the fourth chapter. They base their conclusion principally upon two facts: First, that the voice of the trumpet said to John, "Come up hither" (4: 1), this indicating to them that the command was symbolic in meaning, to the effect that John represents the church, past and present, and that his being caught up to heaven was the sign of all the saints, then and there, being taken thither; and second, that from this time onward in the record, as they say, the church entirely disappears from the earthly scene, there being no further mention of her, except as in heaven, to the end of the book. We shall not now speak of the last part of this statement, as we shall do this somewhat later. But we would comment upon the first part of it, pointing out several facts which seem to oppose and contradict it: First, it is to be observed that the phrase, "Come up hither," is a small foundation upon which to build so large a superstructure as that of resurrection and rapture. Second, John, later in the record, is found again on earth (11: 1; 13: 1; 17: 1), again in heaven (10: 1, 5), and again on "a great and high mountain" (21: 10), which, if he is made the sign of the movements of the sleeping and waking saints, would have these going and coming in a rather bewildering succession of movements. Third, it is strange beyond understanding, if the resurrection and translation of the saints do take place in this fourth chapter, that there

is no mention of it, for the event is mighty beyond imagination, and our need of knowledge of it, at this point, is important beyond description. And lastly, it is a fact that there is no view, subsequent to the command, "Come up hither," of the saints in heaven in resurrection form, which, no doubt, would have been the case if such had taken place; but, on the contrary, somewhat later, we are given to see the souls of the martyrs beneath the altar crying, "How long" (6: 10), this betokening the fact that they — and, therefore, all others — were still waiting for their resurrection bodies. Indeed, it seems as if we are justified in saying, that there is no hint of the coming of Christ and the consequent resurrection and rapture of the saints in this fourth chapter; and hence, we are confident in making the statement that the first intimation of these events taking place is found, not here, but in the fourteenth chapter, as a foreview of what is to come (14:1–16), and in the nineteenth, as a description of what there actually takes place (19: 1–21).

35

The theory, as held by some interpreters, that the saints, spoken of in the Revelation from the fourth chapter onward, constitute a lower Jewish order which is not Christian, presents what appear to be insurmountable difficulties. First, the theory calls for a setting aside, as connected with these saints, of all the Christian descriptive phraseology which is contained in the remainder of the book. Second, the theory demands an acceptance of the following facts: a post-advent and pre-tribulation outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Jews; acceptance of the Messiah by multitudes of these; the establishment by God of a new and peculiar class of saints; a post-tribulation and thus a third coming of Christ; and an additional and

separate resurrection and rapture of Jewish disciples at the end of the seven-year rule of the Antichrist; all of which, so far as we can judge, must be derived from the imagination, for such views do not appear to have any scriptural passages to support them. And finally, the theory is positively opposed to the statements of the Revelation from the fourth chapter onward, since these point to a distinct Christian people, verses, for instance, in the twentieth chapter describing the tribulation saints as belonging to the "first resurrection" (20: 5), as being "blessed" and "holy," as being "priests of God and of Christ," and as being such as "shall reign with him a thousand years" (20: 6). In other words, it would seem as if the conclusion must be reached that all of the saints referred to in the Revelation, not only before but also subsequent to the fourth chapter, are Christian in life, character, testimony, and rewarding, and hence, in a complete sense, are members of the body of Christ.

36

The above reasoning is generally controverted by the statement to which reference has been made, namely, that the church is not mentioned as being on earth after the fourth chapter. If it is meant by this that the word church does not occur subsequent to that portion of the book, the statement is a correct one. But if it is meant that Christians are not referred to, the declaration does not seem to be true. In considering the matter, it is to be kept in mind that it is of no great consequence that the word church does not occur in the portion of the book designated, for this is true of other parts of the New Testament, it not being found in two of the epistles of Paul, in one epistle of Peter and in two epistles of John, and yet it

being clear that the church is present in all of these scriptures. Far more important then, is the fact that Christians are frequently mentioned, provided we may take the use of Christian phraseology as applied to individuals as the evidence of this fact. And this last seems to be the case, as the following passages indicate: "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" (7: 3); "And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand" (8: 4); "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (12: 17); "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear" (13: 8, 9); "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (13: 10); "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God" (14: 4, 5); "Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (14: 12); "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (14: 13); "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (16: 15); "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the

martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration" (17: 6); "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (18: 4). Now, who are these whose names have been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb, who have the faith of Jesus, who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, who are the martyrs of Jesus, who die in the Lord and who are promised the divine benediction if they are found watching for Christ's appearing? It can, of course, be said that they are post-advent saints. But does this answer explain away their Christian standing? After all, could such language be used by the Holy Spirit of any who were not members of the body of Christ? And, if the answer to this is, No, then do not Christians appear long after the fourth chapter and far into the days of the Antichrist? It would seem as if they did. And this is particularly the case in view of the fact that there is hardly one of the passages quoted which may not be duplicated almost verbatim in those books of the New Testament of whose church aspect there cannot be the slightest doubt.

37

The sixth chapter begins the second time-period, namely, that of the seven seals, and, according to our conviction, it introduces us to the Man of Sin and his earthly reign. For the white horse warrior in the chapter (6: 1, 2) is not the Christ, but the Antichrist. The Man of Sin comes on a white horse, for first, he is at the beginning a man of peace, and second, he is the hypocritical anticipator and imitator of the true white horse warrior of the nineteenth chapter (19: 11). But he soon reveals himself in his real character, for the white horse is followed by the red, the

black and the pale, and no sooner do these last appear than the earth reeks with blood and is filled with the cries of wounded, starving and dying men (6: 3–8). The Antichrist is designedly called by the Spirit, "The Beast." Such he is in extraction (17: 7, 8), character (13: 2–6), authority (13: 4) and activity (13: 7, 8); and, at last, God deals with him as such (19: 19, 20). Who the Antichrist will be, nationally, is a difficult question, but there is reason to believe that he will be a Greek. The evidence in this direction is as follows: First, if there is no Scripture to the contrary, it may almost be taken for granted that Antichrist will be of Grecian extraction from the fact that he will represent the highest development of human wisdom, for Greece stands for this (1 Cor. 1: 18–22). Second, the Antichrist will not be a Jew, but a Gentile, the Revised Version of Daniel 11: 36, 37 — which passage plainly refers to the Man of Sin — correcting the Authorized and making it plain that his "fathers" have been Gentile idolaters, worshipping not God, but the gods, and that he himself is like to them. Third, when Antichrist comes, he will rule over a "small people," which presumably is Greece (Dan. 11: 21–23). Fourth, in the last days and at the time of the Antichrist, the children of Judah and Jerusalem will be sold as slaves to the Grecians, which indicates that this people, at the time, are in political and commercial power (Joel 3: 1–6). Fifth, the figure in the Revelation which portrays the Antichrist is a leopard (13: 1, 2), and it is plainly stated in Daniel that this beast represents the king and country of Greece (Dan. 7: 6; 8: 21). Sixth and finally, the most full and detailed account of the Antichrist is found in the eleventh chapter of Daniel, the description there passing from the type to the antitype; and the antitype is the Antichrist and his type is that Grecian general, Antiochus Epiphanes, who followed Alexander the Great

and ruled over Syria, inclusive of Palestine (11: 1–4, 20–39). This last evidence seems conclusive. Incidentally, it gives strong indication of the fact that the Antichrist will not be the last pope of Rome, for no Grecian, and particularly, no Grecian general has ever been a pope, and it is inconceivable that any ever will be.

38

A careful reading of the Revelation discovers the fact that it is a book, not only of joy, but also and especially, of sorrow. Its heavenly aspect is always one of joy and its ultimate issue one of transcendent joy. But its earthly scenes are filled with suffering and death, and the cries of pain and heart-break are heard again and again. The book is made up of twenty-two chapters; and fifteen of these have mostly to do with persecutions from men and judgments from God. From the sixth chapter to the nineteenth inclusive, the Antichrist is on the earthly field of action and it is the day of Satan's unfettered and almost illimitable power. Whatever the divine motive in allowing such a state of things, it is manifestly the fact that the last days of this age will largely be given up to the enemy of God and men, and that he will be allowed to rage and destroy almost without limitation. Even when God begins to take issue with him and thus to bring deliverance to persecuted saints, He does so in stages and by slowly increasing judgments, delaying His final inhibitions, first, through seven long, weary years (20: 1–3), and finally, to the end of the thousand years (20: 7–10). "Great is the mystery of godliness" (I Tim. 3: 16). But possibly, it is nowhere greater than in God's sovereign choice to permit evil and to allow it to take its full and steady course to its long-drawn-out end. Nevertheless, there is an end; and one day it

will be reached. In the meantime, it is for those on earth to learn from those in heaven to say with unfaltering trust and patience "O Lord, the God, the Almighty; just and true are thy ways, the king of the nations" (15: 3).

39

It is generally conceded, as evidenced by the prophecy in Dan. 9: 24–27, that the "seventy weeks" there spoken of (9: 24) are weeks of years, which are to be multiplied by the numeral 7, and hence, which number in all 490 years. This conclusion is reached in the following manner: The Hebrew word which the Authorized and Revised Versions translate "week" is one which signifies an indefinite portion of time which has been sevened. That is, the word does not indicate the length of the period in mind, whether shorter or longer, but simply that the space of time, whatever it is, has been divided into seven parts. In studying the Daniel passage and seeking to determine what these parts represent, it is to be noticed that there is a starting point, the *terminus a quo*, and an ending one, the *terminus ad quem*. The first is, "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" (9: 25); and the second is, "until the Messiah, the Prince," (9: 25); and the interim time is said to be "seven weeks and threescore and two weeks" (9: 25). The objective point is further described, in the words, "after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself" (9: 26). All of this makes it clear that the reach of the passage is from the time Artaxerxes gave the edict to restore Jerusalem (Neh. 2: 1–8) to that which marked the crucifixion of Christ, that is, A.D. 29. Artaxerxes began to reign in 474 B.C. He put forth his edict in the twentieth year of his reign (Neh. 2: 1), which was 454 B.C. If we

add "seven weeks," or 49 years (9: 25), to "threescore and two weeks," or 434 years (9: 25), we have a total of 483 years. This brings the time to A.D. 29. Thus the ultimate of the prophecy is reached, namely, the crucifixion of Christ. This seems like correct reasoning. In case it is, we see that each of the prophetic "weeks" in the Daniel passage expresses its etymological meaning by being sevened, and thus, that each "week" represents seven years. This brings us to the important conclusion that the final "week"—the one which succeeds the sixty-nine "weeks," makes up the "seventy weeks," and is yet to be fulfilled (9: 26, 27)—is, like all of the other "weeks," to be multiplied by seven and thought of in terms of years. This then makes the last "week" (9: 26, 27) one of seven years. As this last "week" is the one in which the Antichrist will live and reign, it follows that the period in which the Man of Sin will be on the scene of his deceiving and destroying activities will be one of exactly seven years.

40

In further development of the above, it is to be observed that there were four commandments or decrees which were put forth and which are referred to by Daniel. These were, Cyrus to Ezra, B.C. 536 (Dan. 1: 1); Darius to Ezra, B.C. 519 (Dan. 6: 1–12); Artaxerxes to Ezra, B.C. 468 (Dan. 7: 7–11); and Artaxerxes to Nehemiah, B.C. 454 (Dan. 2: 1–5). The first decree was related to the building of the temple; the second was also related to the building of the temple; the third was related to the return of the Jews to Jerusalem and the carrying to that city certain materials for the temple; and the fourth was related to the building of the city of Jerusalem, the temple having been constructed

between the third and fourth decrees. This last decree, as it is the only one which refers to the restoration and building of Jerusalem, must be the one which is referred to in Dan. 9: 25, for this verse distinctly states that the starting point of reckoning is "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem." It is stated in Dan. 9: 26 that the ending point of the "seven weeks," namely, 49 years, plus the "threescore and two weeks," namely, 434 years — in other words, sixty-nine weeks, namely, 483 years — was to be the cutting off of the Messiah, which is the crucifixion of Christ, and this event — making allowance for the four years of incorrect chronology — took place at A.D. 29. Summing up then, we have the following: The full time prophesied in Dan. 9: 25, 26, is 49 years plus 434 years, which is a total of 483 years. Artaxerxes' decree to rebuild Jerusalem went forth in the twentieth year of his reign (Neh. 2: 1), that is, in 454 B.C. Adding the 29 years to this number, it gives the total mentioned above, namely, 483 years. It seems just to conclude, therefore, that the decree referred to in Dan. 9: 25 is that issued by Artaxerxes to Nehemiah as recorded in Neh. 2: 1–8.

41

There are two princes spoken of in the ninth chapter of Daniel, the first in verse 25 and the second in verse 26. In verse 25, the words are "Messiah the Prince," so that we know that the prince referred to is Christ. In verse 26, the words are, "the people of the prince," so that the personality of the prince is not described. It would be natural to suppose, at first sight, that the prince of verse 25 is that of verse 26, and it would be right, even after consideration, to come to this conclusion, if nothing forbad it. But several facts seem to point in the direction of there

being two personages in view instead of one. The Prince of verse 25, we are told, is Christ. But certain things are stated concerning the prince of verse 26, which were not and never will be true of Christ. In the first place, this second prince with his people, destroys Jerusalem and the sanctuary (Dan. 9: 26). In the second place, he confirms the covenant with many (the Jews), for a "week," that is, for seven years (Dan. 9: 27). In the third place, he breaks the covenant in the midst of the "week," that is, just after the first three and a half years and just before the second three and a half years (Dan. 9: 27). In the fourth place, he makes the sacrifice and oblation to cease (Dan. 9: 27). And lastly, he keeps the temple desolate until the consummation, that is, until he, the desolator, is desolated (Dan. 9: 27). Now, none of these several events is connected in the Scripture with Christ, either as related to His first coming or second. But all of them are connected in Scripture with the Antichrist (Dan. 8: 9, 11–13, 23–25; 11: 21, 22, 28, 30–32; 12: 11). We conclude, therefore, that the first Prince is Christ, and the second is Antichrist, the second one being a usurper, who wears falsely and blasphemously the Other's name and title.

42

The Scripture nowhere gives the before mentioned seven years of the Antichrist — except by implication in Dan. 9: 27 — in figures. It confirms the measurement of the period, however, in several ways. First, in the Daniel passage, it divides the "week" into halves by the phrase, "in the midst of the week" (9: 27). Second, it gives in Daniel — as judged by the context — the latter half of the "week" in three terms, namely, "a time, times and an half" (7: 25; 12: 7), "a thousand two hundred and ninety

days" (12: 11), and "a thousand three hundred and five and thirty days" (12: 12). Third, it presents in the Revelation in various phrases the same period — as judged by the context — in exact measurement, namely, "forty and two months" (11: 2), "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (11: 3; 12: 6), and "a time, and times, and half a time" (12: 14). It will be seen that all of these measurements have in view three and a half years, which, manifestly, is the half of the prophetic "week" (Dan. 9: 26, 27); and these three and a half years, being the half, necessarily signify that the full "week" is one of seven years. Just what the difference of time which is noted in Dan. 12: 11 and 12: 12 indicates is impossible to say. The three and a half years amount to "forty two months" (Rev. 11: 2), or — reckoning thirty days to a month — "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Rev. 11: 3; 12: 6). In the first of the Daniel passages mentioned (12: 11), there is an excess, beyond the twelve hundred and sixty days, of thirty days, and in the second (12: 12), one of seventy-five days. Some events, therefore, must follow the three and a half year period, one of which ends in thirty days thereafter, and the other in seventy-five days. But what these events are is not revealed.

43

The Authorized Version expresses the commandments given in verses 6: 1, 3, 5 and 7 by the words, "Come and see," as if the living creatures were speaking to John. The Revised Version changes this reading and expresses the commandments by the one word, "Come," thus signifying that the living creatures were addressing, not John, but the four horses, one by one. The latter form of words, as evidenced by the best Greek texts, is to be pre-

ferred. Accepting this as a fact, two things become at once evident; first, the high place of authority God gives to the living creatures, they being the official communicators of the divine decrees; and second, the absolute control which the One who sits upon the throne of heaven has over both the unseen and seen worlds. This last truth, as related to these present days, as well as to those to come, brings to the fearsome heart great comforting. If God controls all of the unseen and seen forces; if He has His powerful hand not only upon earth's good, but also, upon its evil; if He is the One who can say to Satan, "Thus far and no farther;" if, as here, Antichrist cannot come forth upon his mission of hellish hate and destruction until he is permitted and bidden by God; what then may His children fear, even "though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof?" (Ps. 46: 2, 3). All that any saint now needs to do, all that he will then need to do, will be this — to be still and know that God is GOD! (Ps. 46: 10). Satan may prove himself, by divine permission, to be mighty; but God is always and in all things ALMIGHTY. So then, the Devil may never go beyond the length of his chain. Whatever he may do, he will, after all, but fulfill the will of Him who has staked him fast. (Joel 1: 6–22).

44

All of the seals spoken of from the sixth chapter onward lie within the first half of the prophetic "week," that is, within the first three and a half years of the reign of the Antichrist. The breaking of the first seal, which calls forth the Man of Sin, begins these years, and the breaking of

the other seals continues them. By the time that the seventh seal is broken, the first half of the " week " is well advanced, though it is not finished, for the seven trumpets also, lie within the first portion of the " week " period. As to the horses, they stand for the Antichrist, and their coloring symbolizes the events which occur in connection with their appearing. Thus, the white horse represents the Antichrist as a man of peace, and of victory through peace (Dan. 6:1, 2; 11: 21–24); the red horse represents him as a man of war, where, peace having failed, he has recourse to the arbitrament of battle (6: 3, 4); the black horse represents him as the one who, through war, brings famine upon the earth, food being so scarce that it will have to be carefully weighed out, and so high in price that a day's wage will not be sufficient to pay for a man's daily portion (6: 5, 6); and the pale horse represents him as the one who, through continued and more extensive wars, produces widespread death, so much so that there are not enough men left on earth to keep the wild beasts from multiplying and devastating inhabited parts (6: 7, 8). The description of these four horses occupies little space in the text and their advent is told in simple language. But the words used are pregnant with meaning, setting forth the most momentous events which, up to the time in view, have ever blackened and reddened the pages of history.

45

The opening of the fifth seal in the sixth chapter suddenly reveals a heavenly scene, which is the counterpart of a concurrent earthly experience (6: 9–11). As we have seen, the previous four seals have brought upon earth, first, the Antichrist, and then, his devastating wars (6: 1–8). The war calamities are widespread, involving a fourth part

of the earth (6: 8); and it is evident, being this, that they overtake and overwhelm many of God's saints. It is not fully, as yet, a case of persecution and martyrdom; rather, it is one of an involving war, which touches the persons of Christians as well as others. At the same time, there is here a commencement of martyr experiences, because the saints are called upon to stand for the truth and to testify to the same, and, as a result of their fidelity, they are slain by the sword (6: 9). It is thus, as the vision shows, that their souls go up to heaven, and rest there beneath God's altar. From that vantage place, they cry, asking how long it will be before the divine vengeance will be poured forth (6: 10); whereupon they are told that they must rest "for a little season," namely, that portion of the seven years which remains, until their fellow-servants and their brethren are likewise killed (6: 11). All this indicates, first, that the resurrection and rapture have not yet taken place, or else these souls would not be waiting beneath the altar; and second, that this martyrdom of saints is not a final, but only a preliminary one. Following this vision, as we shall see, there will be other scenes of martyrdom, considerably later in time. In other words, the experiences of this sixth chapter — as has been said — lie within the first half of the prophetic "week." The tribulation has begun. But, as yet, the resulting suffering is but the "beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24: 8).

46

At the opening of the sixth seal in the sixth chapter, God commences to move in judgment, taking His first issue with the Antichrist and his followers (6: 12–17). He does not here far advance the judgment which He begins, for at this time, as took place in the time of Pharaoh, He restrains

Himself even in His wrath, thus giving men opportunity to repent. His visitation, therefore, is preliminary and partial; and, in order to beget fear of His power, it is manifested by heavenly portents and earthly disturbances (6: 12–14). But, as happened during the ten judgments in Egypt, God's mercy manifested in the midst of judgment has no other effect than that of hardening men's hearts, making high and low, rich and poor, free and bond, to cry out in deadly terror, but nothing more (6: 15–17). There is something very appealing in organized society as we see it; kings, nobles, merchants, warriors, freemen, bondmen, the palace and hut, the camp and mart, and all vibrant with life and energy; and we often wonder if, after all, men are so bad, where they appear to be so lawfully and innocently occupied with the affairs of daily living. But a scene like this suddenly wakens us from our illusion. In a moment we see what God all along has seen, beneath and within, the spirit and the sin. And thus, through a flash of revelation, we suddenly realize what we ought to have known from the beginning, namely, that the heart of man, whatever the gloss, is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17: 9).

47

At the seventh chapter there begins a new time-period, namely, the third, which is that of the seven trumpets. Here, as in the two previous periods, there is first, the introduction (7: 1 to 8: 6), and second, the description (8: 7 to 9: 21; 11: 15), this last setting forth the earthly events which take place within the period, that is, while the seven trumpets are sounding. We have not yet reached in the record the divine intimation that the second three and a half years have begun, and hence, we

must conclude that the first three and a half years are still running their course. It is to be remembered, however, that the seals, with the exception of the seventh, have been broken, and it is to be concluded from this that considerable progress has been made in the first half of the prophetic "week," this probably amounting to about half of that time, that is, twenty-one months. The seventh seal is broken at the beginning of chapter eight (8: 1), it being inserted at that place, instead of in the seventh chapter, because the latter is but the introduction to the former, the description of the period's earthly incidents beginning at 8: 6 and all of its events falling under this seventh seal and being subsequent to it. It will be seen from the foregoing that the record of the seven years is making regular, chronological advancement, developing, in time and episode, in a well ordered and clearly defined fulfillment.

48

We have noted that God's judgments upon sinful men began in the second period, it being that of the seven seals (6: 1–8). We must now observe that the introduction before us (7: 1 to 8: 6) makes it plain that similar judgments are to characterize the third period, this being that of the seven trumpets (7: 1–3). The first words of the introduction indicate this last, for the holding back of the avenging angels there described (7: 1–3) is only "till" the servants of God have been sealed upon their foreheads, such language implying that afterwards these angels will be loosed and bidden to carry on their destroying work, which is exactly what is found when the description of their activities is given (8: 7–13; 9: 1–22). As we are coming now within view of God's greater judgments, it will be well to point out a few facts, so that these may be

in mind, about all of the divine judgments as they are described in the book of the Revelation. These facts are as follows: first, God's judgments begin with physical sufferings (6: 11–17), and end with spiritual (19: 20); second, they begin with men who are lesser sinners, that is, men in general (6: 15), and end with those who are the greatest sinners, that is, with Antichrist and the false prophet (19: 20); third, they begin in grace and mercy, that is, with the intention of leading men to repentance (9: 20, 21), and end in wrath and torment, that is, in final punishment of sin (19: 20; 20: 10, 12–15); fourth, they begin with comparative lightness (6: 12–17), and end with terrible intensity (20: 10; 21: 8); and lastly, they begin in time (6: 1–8), and end in eternity (20: 10–15; 21: 8). As we go on with our study, we cannot fail to note this progress in judgment, for the manifestation of it is plain and impressive. There is an important distinction, however, which we need to keep in mind, especially in view of the fact that the saints are involved in those judgments which occur upon the earth. Both tribulation and wrath are the portion of the wicked (Rom. 2: 8, 9; 1 Thess. 1: 6–9). Tribulation is the portion of the righteous (Acts 14: 22; 1 Thess. 3: 4; Rev. 7: 14), but wrath never is (1 Thess. 1: 10; 5: 9). As to tribulation, it is to be remembered that outwardly it may be much the same in respect to the righteous (Matt. 24: 21, 22; Rev. 6: 9) as it is in respect to the wicked (6: 12–17; 9: 18). There is, however, an essential difference, as between the two classes affected by it: the cause, in the case of the righteous, is devotion to Christ, (6: 9; 12: 11) and the result, a greater godliness and rewarding (Rom. 5: 3; 8: 35; 12: 12; Rev. 7: 14); while, in the case of the wicked, the cause is sin and the result is further sin, settled despair and destroying judgment (6: 16, 17; 9: 20, 21; 19: 19–21).

49

The seventh chapter begins the introduction to the third, or trumpet period (see the Analysis) and the four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, that is, at the north, south, east and west positions, indicates that the divine judgments, at this juncture, are broadening out and are about to involve many peoples (7: 1). It is not clear that the phrase, "four corners of the earth," means the whole earth, inclusive of the farthest portions of it, for the word "earth" is *gē*, which may signify only the land in view; and, in addition, it may be understood that the Revelation — unless otherwise indicated — has regard to the earth as it was known to the apostles and early disciples, which, for the most part, was the Roman Empire. But, granting a meaning which will be short of the most distant places, it still remains the fact that the four angels were placed in positions widely separated from one another, and that they were looking forward to a judgment of an extensive kind. Here we have something in respect to God's judgments which is frequently true. Divine judgments relate themselves at first, to a single person; but, presently, they may become both national and international. And the reason of this is not far to seek. Sin begins with an individual. But it does not end there, especially if that individual stands high in the nation and is a man of commanding power. The one-man sin, in such a case, soon becomes a many-men one, until, probably God has before Him a problem of judgment which is as wide as the land over which the individual rules. It was thus, of old, in Judah's and Israel's time. It has been so, again and again, in more modern times. And it is evidently the case, here in the Revelation. Antichrist has come upon the scene, defiant of all that is holy and good but rich with

promises of peace and prosperity; and, such is his influence, that it takes only a few years to enable him to corrupt multitudes of persons. So then, God at this place has more than an Antichrist to deal with. He must also reach out after the host scattered abroad. It is thus that it comes to pass that the four angels take their places at the four corners of the earth. In a little while now, in the record, judgments, near and far, will be under way and in full and fearful force.

50

If we were lacking evidence of the compassion of God toward sinful men, we should certainly find it in the book of the Revelation. Again and again, in the midst of the stirrings of His anger toward such, we find touches of His tenderness in respect to them. Here in this seventh chapter, the four angels are bidden to hold back, for a little, the four winds of the earth, that the wind may not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree (7: 1). A little later, when the angels are sent forth on their errand of vengeance, they are permitted to burn up a third part of the trees, and to destroy a third part of the creatures in the sea and of the ships upon it; but two thirds of all these are spared (8: 7–9). Still later, a great star falls upon the waters, the sun, moon and stars are smitten (8: 10–12); but only a third part of these is affected. Still later, the locusts are allowed to torment men; but they are not allowed to kill them (9: 3–5). And at the beginning of these judgment times, God commands that the oil and wine — His remedy and solace for physical suffering — should not be hurt (6: 6). It is to be noted that the divine compassions in this present instance, are not only in behalf of wicked men, but also and particularly, of His saints. The four angels hold back the blasting winds until the one

hundred and forty-four thousand are sealed, and these are sealed in order that they may not be killed (7: 3; 9: 4, 5). Nevertheless, the statement made concerning God's compassion toward sinners remains true. God willeth not that any should perish (2 Pet. 3: 9), and, in consequence, He delays judgment as long as possible; and, when He allows it to begin, He mitigates it as much as possible. We are not to conclude from this that His final judgment does not fall and that it is not eternal. There is an end of grace as touching the sinner, and nowhere is this made more plain than in this very book where mercy is so often and fully expressed. The divine penalties toward the godless move slowly. But they move exceeding surely. And they end in the lake of fire (10: 6; 21: 8).

51

We shall comment upon the one hundred and forty-four thousand company mentioned in chapter seven (7: 4–8) when we come to the fourteenth chapter (14: 1–5), so that we may pass by the subject now, except as we call attention to a few characteristics of this class of persons. The first thing to notice is that they are Jews, being taken, in companies of twelve thousand each, from the twelve tribes of Israel, thus making one hundred and forty-four thousand in all (7: 4–8). The second thing is, that they are Christians, being sealed with the Father's name upon their foreheads (7: 3; 14: 1), being the servants of God (7: 3), and being those who follow the Lamb (14: 4). The third thing is, that they are sealed in relationship with and in preparation for the trumpet period, this time being the latter part of the first three and half years of the prophetic "week," as the seven trumpets are about to sound (8: 6). And the last thing is, that the sealing was not to

exempt this class of persons from persecution and suffering, but only from the usual consequence of these, namely, death (9: 3–5).

52

It is to be kept in mind that we are still, from the standpoint of our study, in the introduction to the trumpet period, this running from 7: 1 to 8: 6 (see the Analysis). It is this fact which explains what we now meet with at the close of the seventh chapter, the vision of a martyr throng (7: 9–17). In the sixth chapter, we saw one martyr company (6: 9–11), and here we see another, each, in some particulars, being similar to the other (6: 11; 7: 9). But there is difference as well as similarity so that we are not to conclude that the two companies are the same. First, there is the difference of time, the martyrs of the sixth chapter meeting death in the first part of the first three and a half years, and those of the seventh, in the second part of it. Second, the martyrs of the sixth chapter are, in a particular sense, war martyrs, being unwilling to follow the Antichrist in his pursuit of fame and power, and suffering death by the sword in consequence of this (6: 1–9), and these of the seventh chapter are such as have been persecuted, during these same war times, for righteousness' sake, having been driven into desert places and having died of hunger, thirst and exposure, their heavenly rewardings being the opposite of their earthly experiences (7: 13–17). And third, these martyrs of the seventh chapter are distinctly separate from those of the sixth in the place the sovereign God gives to them in heaven, the former class resting beneath the outer altar (6: 9), and this one standing before the throne and the Lamb, with palms in their hands (8: 9). We are to remember that we are considering the introduction to the forthcoming trumpet period

(see the Analysis) and that it is not retrospective but prospective, it giving us a divine forecast of what is to take place in that period. In other words, we have here a prestatement of what occurs later, when the trumpets are sounding (8: 6), God's judgments are multiplying (8: 6–13), and the Antichrist's persecutions are increasing in extent and power (7: 9, 14).

53

In order to maintain a true scriptural perspective in respect to the various visions of martyred saints, the distinction between the first half and last of the prophetic "week" (Dan. 9: 27) must be kept fully in view. Martyrdom characterizes both portions of the seven years, for throughout the Antichrist is a persecutor of the saints. But in the first half, persecution and death are of a general kind, while in the latter, they are of a particular one. In other words, in the first three and a half years the saints lose their lives as a result of the Antichrist's wars and because of his aggressiveness in establishing both the Jewish (Dan. 9: 27) and an apostate Christian religion (17: 1–3), while in the second, the Man of Sin having thrown off his religious mask and proclaimed himself to be God, they are persecuted and killed as a consequence of his demanding their worship and because they refuse to give this (13: 4–9). All of the tribulations which result from the persecutions of the Antichrist, whether in the first or second half of the "week," go to make up the final tribulation; but it is clear that the persecutions, steadily increasing both in intensity and extensity, reach their climax in the latter half of the week (Dan. 12: 1; Matt. 24: 21; Rev. 2: 9, 10, 22; 7: 14; 13: 1–8). Now it is to be noted that a number of visions is given of the martyr saints, and that these, in spite of the fact that they occur at different places in the book and

at different stages of the events described, seem to be repetitions of one another. When, however, it is remembered that martyrdoms occur at different times within the whole seven years, some in the first part of this period and some in the second, then it will be seen that the several visions are not of the same companies of persons, but rather, of different and separate ones. Thus, the first vision of the martyrs, given at the opening of the fifth seal, shows us saints who have suffered death in the earlier stage of the rule of the Antichrist, in the first half of the prophetic week, which explains why they are told that they must rest for a little until their fellow servants and brethren are killed as they were (6: 9–11). Again, a second vision of the martyred ones, given in the introduction to the trumpet period (see the Analysis), shows us saints who have suffered death in the trumpet period, and hence in the first half of the prophetic " week," but at a still later stage of the Antichrist's career, at a time when persecutions have enlarged their sphere and taken in a multitude out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues (7: 9, 10). Again, a third vision of martyrs, given in the introduction to the vial period (see the Analysis), shows us saints who have suffered death in that period, and, therefore, at a considerably later stage of the Antichrist's persecutions, this time in the latter half of the prophetic " week," for the image spoken of is erected at the middle of the " week " and this has already been set up (15: 2, 3). And finally, a fourth vision of the martyr multitude, given in the judgment period (see the Analysis) shows us all of the saints who have been killed by the Antichrist gathered into the presence of the Lamb, which is after the prophetic " week " is over and the tribulation is fully and forever past (20: 4–6). Thus we have vision after vision of the martyrs. But each time we see a new company of these

saints, until at last, we behold all of them brought safely and rejoicingly home.

54

At the beginning of the eighth chapter — which is a part of the introduction to the trumpet period — the phrase occurs, "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" (8: 1). The question arises here, Do the words, "half an hour," mean what they say; or are they expressive of an uncertain and longer period of time? And this raises a similar question, Are the time measurements given in the Revelation to be taken literally or symbolically? These measurements are used in the following places and connections: "ten days" (2: 10); "half an hour" (8: 1); "five months" (9: 1); "forty and two months" (11: 2; 13: 5); "three days and an half" (11: 9, 11); "a thousand, two hundred and threescore days" (12: 6); "time and times and half a time" (12: 14); "one hour" (17: 12) and "a thousand years" (20: 2–7). To place these enumerations in conjunction is interesting. But it is more than this; it proves helpful in answering the question raised concerning literalism or symbolism.

55

It is evident that several of the time measurements quoted above are to be taken literally. For instance, as we have already found in our study, the phrases, "forty and two months" (11: 2; 13: 5), "a thousand, two hundred and threescore days" (12: 6), "a time and times and half a time" (12: 14), represent — on the basis of thirty days in a month— exactly three and a half years. This fact, as evidenced by these three passages, seems to put the stamp of literalism upon all of the time measurements given in the

Revelation. There is no more reason to suppose that the three passages are more literal than the others; and there is every reason to believe, in case they are literal, that the remaining passages are also such. In other words, all of the time measurements, in respect to literalness, are to be placed in the same category, that is, all are to be rejected or accepted. Three of them may be accepted in exactness; and we conclude that the others may be.

56

An objection naturally arises to the above conclusion as related to such minor time measurements as, "ten days" (2: 10), "half an hour" (8: 1), "five months" (9: 1), and "three days and an half" (11: 9, 11). At first sight, it would seem that such short spaces of time, with a literal interpretation put upon them, ought to find no place in a book of such extensive movements and measurements as the Revelation. But two important facts are to be remembered before a conclusion of this kind is reached: first, the major part of the book has to do with time and not eternity, and this time — from 6: 1 to 19: 21 — is only seven years; and second, it is often the case in history that short spaces of time, not to speak of such intensive days as are portrayed in this section of the Scripture, are immensely pregnant with meaning. The storm in the English channel, in 1588, only lasted a few days; but it broke up the Spanish armada and preserved British nationality and civilization. The *coup d' etat* of Napoleon the first, in 1804, took place in a single day; but it changed the history of France and Europe. The pulling of the trigger of a gun aimed at the Austrian heir to the throne by a student yet in his teens, in 1914, was accomplished in less than a minute; but it altered the course of the whole world. And it is evident

that a like time intensity is to be the order of things in the days of the Antichrist. Earth's history will then come to its fruition and will be surcharged with events. In such conditions, a year, month, week, day or hour will carry with it tremendous potentiality, and out of infinitely small things, in time and episode, will come those which are infinitely great. As a deduction from the fact that the time measurements above referred to are literally exact, we conclude that the longest of these, namely, the " one thousand years " — given six times over in the twentieth chapter — is exactly what it is there said to be. In short, it is our opinion that all of the time measurements in the Revelation are to be understood in a wholly literal sense. As to the phrase with which we began, the silence in heaven of half an hour seems to be the lull before the storm. The trumpet period which follows is to be one of increased and increasing judgments; and before it begins, there is that awesome stillness which, in heaven as well as on earth, presages outbreak, devastation and woe.

57

There were various occasions in the Old Testament when trumpets were used and various purposes to which they were dedicated. It is only necessary in this place, to point out the fact that one occasion and purpose — and a chief one — was in connection with the proclamation and propagation of war (Num. 10: 9, 10; Judg. 3: 26–30; 6: 34, 35; 7: 7, 8, 17, 18). This seems to be the thought presented by the use of the seven trumpets here in the Revelation (8: 2–6). In Joel 2: 1, we have the words, " Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; " and in

Zephaniah (1: 14–16) the words: "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly; that day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness; a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers." It will be noted that each of these scriptures is prophetic, and that each has reference to the day of the Lord, the period in the Revelation which we are considering; also, that in each passage, the trumpet is an important factor, and that each ushers in a time of devastating war. These hints seem to be sufficient. They are outstretched fingers pointing to the consummation of divine warfare found in the Revelation. Only here, since it is the consummation, there is not one trumpet, but there are seven, which number is the one which indicates fulness and completeness. At the sounding of the seven trumpets, therefore, we see God going forth in His majesty and power to make war against His enemies, to the end that they may be overthrown and destroyed. He begins this progress of judgment at the first trumpet and ends it at the last; that is, He begins His judgments in the first three and a half years (6: 4–17) and ends them in the second (19: 11–21).

58

In the eighth chapter we are told that the "prayers of all saints" are offered upon the "golden altar which was before the throne" (8: 3). There are two interesting facts which grow out of this statement. The first is that the real temple, with its holiest of all (Heb. 8: 2; 9: 3, 8, 10), its brazen altar without (6: 9), its golden altar within (8: 3), its golden candlesticks (1: 12) and its true high priest

(Heb. 5: 5, 6; 8: 1, 2; Rev. 1: 13), was not on earth, but was and is in heaven, the earthly temple being a type, and the heavenly, the antitype; and the second is, that the prayers of the saints reach that upper and most holy place, are incense upon the golden altar, and become effective in fulfilling the great and far-reaching purposes of God. There is no scriptural evidence which would warrant the conclusion that the saints in heaven pray, the petitions which they might offer there being turned into praise (5: 8–10); but there is full evidence here that the saints on earth do pray, that their prayers are heard and answered, and that their intercessions are potent in the hands of God in accomplishing the mightiest effects (8: 3–5). This is tremendously solemn. It is a solemn thing to have such power put into one's possession (Matt. 16: 19; 18: 18); and it is still more solemn to have such committed to us, and then, possibly, either to misuse it, or not to use it at all.

59

The sounding of the first angel's trumpet ushers in the judgments of the third, that is, the trumpet period; (8: 6, 7; see the Analysis). It is to be observed that these trumpet-judgments are not the final ones, the trumpets being in the latter portion of the first three and a half years and the thunder, vial and judgment periods having to follow (see the Analysis). They denote, however, an increase of judgment as compared with the preceding seal period (6: 1–9), and they hold within themselves a further increase of judgment as the seven trumpets, one by one, give forth their notes of divine warfare. It is to be observed also, that the sounding of the trumpets deals with men in judgment in a partial and physical manner (8: 7–13; 9: 1–19). Mercy is mixed in judgment in order to bring sinners

to repentance, and the natural world is dealt with as that upon which man is dependent, in order that the wicked may look up in their bitter need and seek for refuge in God. Thus, only a third of the trees (8: 7), a third of the sea (8: 8), a third of the creatures in the sea (8: 9), a third of the fountains of waters (8: 10), and a third of the sun, moon and stars (8: 12) are involved in the cataclysms which take place. And thus also, when, a little later, judgments further increase and turn into a scourge of locusts with the sting of a scorpion (9: 1–11), the time of this woe is limited to five months (9: 5). As evidenced by sacred and profane history, it has always been a governing principle with God to deal after this manner with wilful and sinful men. The lesser judgments precede the greater, and judgment times are limited before they are extended. The ultimate issue then depends upon men. If they repent, they are forgiven and further judgments are stayed. But if they do not repent, they remain unforgiven and further judgments fall (Jon. 1: 2; 3: 1–10; 4: 9–11). It is this divine principle which we see being worked out here. God is judging and men are suffering. At the same time, God is tempering judgment and men are being given their opportunity to escape increase of suffering.

60

The Greek word, *phrear,* which is translated in the ninth chapter, as in other places, " bottomless pit " (9: 1, 2, 11), means, primarily, a hole in the ground, such as a cistern or well. It thus comes to indicate, as related to scriptural and spiritual issues, the abyss. It is used nine times in the Revelation (9: 1, 2, 2, 2, 11; 11: 7; 17: 8; 20: 1, 3), and in each case is associated with evil and the evil one. It seems to be the equivalent of the word, *tartaros,* or *tartarus,*

found, in other verbal form, in 2 Pet. 2: 4, which signifies the lowest place in Hades, where the fallen angels which are chained have their present dwelling place. Hence, it expresses the deepest of hell's deeps, the prison house of Satan's wickedest spirits, the source of earth's most calamitous woes. It is significant, therefore, that just at this juncture of human events this pit of pits should be opened and that out of it should come these misshapen, vengeful and death-dealing monsters, called "locusts." This is Egypt's plagues over again (Exod. 10: 4–19); only now these loathsome creatures have permitted energy and power which the past did not know. Moreover, we are seeing here the realization of men's ambitions and hopes. They are presently seeking, without God, to tear down the veil which hangs between the seen and unseen, the known and unknown, and to penetrate the mysteries of the eternal world. That veil is lifted in this place, and there is a real and large penetration. It is, however, not from the outer side to the inner, but from the inner to the outer; and the connection between the other world and this is established in judgment and through none other than Satan himself.

61

The close of the ninth chapter is one of the saddest portions of holy Scripture (9: 13–21). A like sad portion is found in Matthew's Gospel, where the simple but awful phrase occurs, "How often would I"—"and ye would not" (Matt. 23: 37). But here, the pathos is intensified. There, it was in the early past, as related to a single nation, and with the prospect of future days and other opportunities. Here, it is in the late future, as related to many nations, and as God's grace is drawing to its close. Just now, in the record, the divine mercy is expressing itself in

manifold ways and most compassionate forms, love seeking to win back wandering souls to forgiveness and peace. But it is all in vain. In spite of heavenly portents, privation and scourge, men repent not of the works of their hands; they persist in their evil worship; they cleave to their idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood; and they refuse to forsake their murders, sorceries, fornications and thefts (9: 20, 21). A noted English scientist has recently said that the modern man is not worrying about his sins. Here, evidently, the men last on earth — so far as the present dispensation is concerned — are of the same state of mind, loving evil more than they fear God and clinging to it even when fearsome sights and sounds are shaking the hands which clutch their prized misdeeds. All this does not agree with the theory that divine judgment is reforming and regenerating in its effect. In fact, the terrible reality and issue of this scene extinguishes any hope which otherwise might exist concerning the efficiency of purgatorial fires. According to the portrayal, the fires have burned and men have suffered untold agonies. But to their latest breath, they reject the living and loving God. It is to be observed that this scene does not fit into the theory of a spiritual evolution amongst mankind, for this is not the beginning of things but the last, and here, at the last, men are more God-defying than ever in the past.

62

The tenth chapter begins the introduction to a new division, that is, the thunder period (see the Analysis). And this division, as in the case of the other divisions, is begun with an introduction (10: 1–3). We have in this case, however, something different from that which has

characterized the preceding divisions. In the others, we have had an introduction, but no conclusion; in this one, we have both an introduction and a conclusion (10: 1–3; 5–11). That this last is the fact becomes plain by studying the chapter. The first verses (10: 1–3) are evidently an introduction to those which describe the seven thunders (10: 3, 4); and the verses which follow these are so intimately connected with them that they cannot be looked upon as a part of the introduction to the next period, but must be regarded as a summing up of the thoughts of the past period, and hence, as its conclusion. The whole, it is to be noted, stands midway between the five periods which describe the earthly course of the Antichrist. The first of these is the seal; the second, the trumpet; the third, the thunder; the fourth, the vial; and the fifth, the judgment (6: 1 to 20: 15); so that two periods stand on either side of the one we are now considering, namely, the thunder period, and thus the last named equally divides between them; (see the Analysis). This is more than interesting; it is, as well, significant. For the context makes it clear that the first two periods lie in the first half of the prophetic "week" and the second two, in the second half. The thunder period, therefore, standing midway between the two halves of the "week," runs the dividing line of time between them, being located exactly at the end of the first three and a half years and at the beginning of the second three and a half. In other words, the thunder period faces backward and forward, over the same length of time. It also, in facing forward, ushers in most solemn events, those which are to characterize the last days of the present dispensation. The sands of time, according to our study, are now running low, there being but three and a half years more before the Lord returns in judgment against the Man of Sin and his followers (19: 11–21). We must expect,

from this time onward until that event is reached, decreasing grace and increasing judgment.

63

The above remarks correspond with and thus illuminate the statement of the angel which is recorded at the close of the sixth verse of this chapter (10: 6). This mighty angel has placed one foot upon the sea and the other upon the land (10: 1, 2, 3), thus signifying the universality of his dominion and the finality of his asseveration; and thus located, he solemnly raises his hand and swears by Him who lives forever and ever, who created the heaven, and the things therein, the earth and the things therein, and the sea and the things therein, that there shall be "time no longer," (10: 6). But it is to be observed, as we pass, while this is the reading of the Authorized Version and even that of the Revised in the margin, that it is manifestly not what the angel said, for succeeding chapters tell us that time will be further extended, it being stated that there will be another "forty and two months" (11: 2) or "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (11: 3), and subsequently "one thousand years" (20: 1, 2). We may understand then, that the word "time" is an incorrect translation of the Greek word used. The word is *chronos,* which means not simply time, as if it might be a single instant, but a space of time, of shorter or longer duration. By implication thus, the word signifies delay, or the opportunity which comes through delay; and the Revised Version has chosen the word "delay" to express its meaning. As judged by the context and the trend of the teaching through the course of these chapters, it is probable that the word conveys the thought both of delay and opportunity. As we have said, grace, from this time on, steadily and in-

creasingly gives place to judgment. This signifies that God purposes henceforth, rapidly to terminate time-space and the privilege of repentance which such grants. Salvation will yet be proclaimed, as the fourteenth chapter makes clear (14: 6, 7); but it will not be largely heeded and its rejection will be followed by fearful and final penalties. In other words, from this point onward, the divine events will go with a rush, and will end in the direful destruction described both by Paul (2 Thess. 1: 7–9) and John (19: 11–21). It is this that the mighty angel, standing on sea and land, signifies. God has delayed His judgments in order that men may have opportunity to be saved (2 Pet. 3: 9, 15); but now, they are fast sinning away their days of grace, and hence the angel declares, there shall be delay and opportunity no longer (10: 6).

64

John was about to repeat what the seven thunders had said when he was commanded by "a voice from heaven" to seal up "the things which had been uttered" (10: 3, 4). To attempt, under these circumstances, to imagine what the words of the thunders were would be, not only idle, but also sacrilegious. It may be allowed us, however, to point out what is said in the Scripture about thunder and thundering to make one or two deductions from this. The word thunder, in its various forms, is used forty times in the Old and New Testaments. Ten of these are found in the book of the Revelation (4: 5; 6: 1; 8: 5; 10: 3, 4, 4; 11: 19; 14: 2; 16: 18; 19: 6). In the Old Testament, the word is generally associated with divine judgment, either as threatening or producing it, through the lightning which accompanies it (Exod. 9: 23; 20: 18; 1 Sam. 2: 10; 7: 10; 12: 17, 18; 2 Sam. 22: 14; Job 26: 14; Ps. 18: 13; 77: 18; 78: 48;

Isa. 29: 6). In the Revelation, this seems always to be the case, the occasions when the word is used being those of judgments, prophesied or expressed. When the word, in the Old or New Testaments, is connected with the voice of God, the suggestion is that of power and destruction (Job 37: 4, 5; 40: 9; Ps. 77: 18; 104: 7; Rev. 14: 2). The sum total of scriptural evidence, therefore, is to the effect that God's thundering is expressive of His liberated wrath and vengeance upon sinful men. Hence, we may judge that the seven thunders of this tenth chapter (10: 3, 4) represent the divine power which has already been put forth and which is about to be sent down from heaven in a devastating and destroying manner. Possibly, the reason why God commanded the voice of the thunders to be sealed was in mercy to those saints who would read the Revelation record, since the full tale of woe would be too dreadful to be perused. If this is true, it follows that the portrayal of the judgments which follow in the vial and judgment periods is not complete, but only partial.

65

In the conclusion which we are now considering and which is related to the thunder period (10: 5–11; see the Analysis), there occurs a notable phrase which is to be most closely observed, for it is the key to a rightful interpretation of important events as recorded in the Revelation. This phrase is found in the words, "mystery of God" (10: 7). The word mystery comes from the Greek noun *mustērion,* which is derived from the verb *muō,* which signifies to shut the mouth. A mystery, therefore, is something unspoken, that is, it is a secret. From a scriptural standpoint, it is a divine thought, purpose or plan which is at first hidden and afterwards revealed (Rom. 11: 25;

16: 25; 1 Cor. 15: 51; Eph. 1: 9; 3: 3, 4; 6: 19; Col. 1: 25–27), and which, being revealed, needs the further illumination and interpretation of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 11: 25; Eph. 3: 3–5; Col. 1: 25–28; 4: 3, 4). There is thus a mystery of evil, which includes that of iniquity (2 Thess. 2: 7) and that of Babylon (Rev. 17: 5, 7). There is also a mystery of good, which includes that of God (1 Cor. 4: 1; Col. 2: 2; Rev. 10: 7); that of Christ (Eph. 3: 4; Col. 1: 26, 27); that of God's will (Eph. 1: 29); that of God's wisdom (1 Cor. 2: 7); that of the kingdom (Matt. 13: 11; Mark 4: 11; Luke 8: 10); that of Israel (Rom. 11: 25); that of the church (Eph. 3: 3; 5: 22); that of the gospel (Rom. 16: 25, 26; Eph. 6: 19); that of faith (1 Tim. 3: 9); that of godliness (1 Tim. 3: 16) and that of Christ's coming (1 Cor. 15: 51–53). Laying hold now upon those mysteries which are most central and important, it is rightful to say that the essential thought of God concerning mystery is related to Christ and the church. In reference to these, it is clear from two passages (Eph. 3: 4; Col. 1: 26, 27) that Christ is the primary mystery, this as the Head of the members of His body; and it is equally clear from one passage (Eph. 3: 3; 5: 22), that the church is the secondary mystery, this as a body made up of Jews and Gentiles united together in the Spirit (Eph. 3: 1–6). This review of Scripture brings us to the conclusion that the mystery of God spoken of in the tenth chapter is the church, and that the statement, "the mystery of God should be finished," refers to the completion of that body. If this is a correct deduction, it becomes plain that the church continues on earth up to the tenth chapter, and also, according to the words of the verse, unto "the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound" (10: 7). In other words, it will be during the first portion of the sounding of the seventh trumpet that the last member

of the body of Christ will be saved, and it will be at the same time that the Lord will return and call the living and dead saints to Himself. As the sound of the seventh angel takes place after the Antichrist has been revealed and during the days of the great tribulation, it becomes evident that the church is continued on earth up to and into the tragic events of the Antichrist's reign (11: 15; 12: 13–17). In confirmation of all of the above, it is instructive to note that the Greek verb here used for "finished" (10: 7) is *teleō*, which means to bring the thing in mind, namely, the completion of the church, to a full end. This is the word, in its noun form, which the Lord uses in Matthew twenty-four to describe the same period of time and the same events of experience (Matt. 24: 6, 13, 14).

66

The eating of the little book by John, recorded in the tenth chapter (10: 10, 11), was a symbolic act with a great reality attached to it. The apostle was not the first who had been called upon to act his part in this manner, for nearly seven hundred years before Ezekiel had been bidden to eat the roll of the book (Ezek. 2: 6–10). And the explanation of the one event is obtained from the other. This then is what Jehovah said to the old-time prophet: "And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they are most rebellious — and when I looked, behold, a hand was sent unto me; and lo, a roll of a book was therein; and he spread it before me; and it was

written within and without; and there was written therein lamentations and mourning and woe. Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll and go, speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness." (Ezek. 2: 6, 7, 9, 10; 3: 1–3). So now, the time of the new-time prophet has come and he too is bidden to eat the roll, in the same manner and with the same results. In the mouth, the words of the Lord are as sweet as honey. But in the belly, they are very bitter. In other words, any and every saint soon finds that God's Word has both a subjective and objective effect. To feed upon it is always sweet; to declare it is often exceedingly bitter. And the most strange thing about it is that the centuries have produced no change in these respects. Whether it be Ezekiel, John or ourselves, it is unchangeably the same; we delight in the Word which others hate; and others hate the Word in which we delight. Evidently then, particularly as related to the objective aspect, human hearts and conditions will remain altogether the same to the end. Back there, men hated the prophet who dared to prophesy according to the word of the Lord (1 Kings 22: 1–8); and here, way down in the end-time, the message and the messenger are utterly despised and rejected (11: 10). It is significant that John is bidden to eat the book representatively. That is, it was not only true that he himself was to prophesy over, or against " many peoples and nations and tongues and kings " (10: 11), but also, he stood for those who, in the last three and a half years of this age, were to do the same (14: 6, 7). This means that the office of prophet will find new application and elevation in the days of the Antichrist, with the

old-time conditions of suffering re-established and re-enforced (11: 3–12; 14: 6–12). And as it was in the case of Jeremiah, who was bidden to prophesy against stiff-necked Israel and who quietly replied, "Amen, O Jehovah!" (Jer. 11: 1–5), so it will be in the last days. It is a blessed fact that there was never yet a people so hard of face that God did not send a prophet to it. And it is an equally blessed fact that there was never yet a time, however hard of face a people might be, but that God could find somewhere a prophet who was willing to go and speak to them. How great, then, is the grace if God; and also, how great is the honor, either in this day or another, to be bidden by Him, as John was, to eat the roll, whether it be sweet or bitter, and especially when it is both.

67

The eleventh chapter begins the introduction to the vial and judgment periods; (11: 1 to 15: 8; see the Analysis). It is the longest introduction found in the Revelation, covering chapters eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen. That this portion of Scripture is an introduction is proven by the fact that the next seventh division of the book, namely, that of the seven vials, does not begin until the second verse of the sixteenth chapter, which indicates that all which lies between the close of the thunder period (10: 11) and the begining of the vial period (16: 1) is introductory to and explanatory of the last named period (see the Analysis). In addition, a close study of this long introduction reveals this fact, that it is introductory, not only to the vial period, but also to the judgment period which follows, the purview of the introduction reaching up to and including the events of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth chapters. We are

to keep in mind as we pass onward in our studies, therefore, that what we find in this introduction is not the actual description of the events of the vial and judgment periods, but the divine, heavenly and spiritual foreview of the same. This understanding of the introduction will explain certain repetitions which occur as between the introduction and description, the one being a pre-statement of the other. Thus, for instance, we have in chapter fourteen — which is a part of the introduction — a portrayal of the coming of Christ (14: 14–20), though this event does not actually take place in the development of the record until chapter nineteen (19: 1–21). In our further study, we shall keep these thoughts in mind and our comments will be in accordance with them.

68

It seems plain, as has been already pointed out (see Paragraph 24), that the old-time setting of things, geographical, national and political, will again be in evidence in the last days of this present age. Indeed, this appears to be the setting of all prophecy, Old Testament and New. Whatever prophet may be speaking, he easily and almost imperceptibly passes from the historic to the prophetic, from the thing which is to that which will be, from that which is most ancient to that which will be most modern. This is notably the case in the eleventh chapter of Daniel, and even more notably, in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. And the meaning of it is that the old represented the new and that the ancient is to be renewed in the modern. Does a prophet speak of Israel as being in Palestine and then suddenly pass to the last days (Isa. 1: 21–24; 2: 1–5)? Then, evidently, Israel is to be restored to the land before the last days come. Does another prophet

speak of Babylon, saying that it will be destroyed forever, that it will never again be inhabited and that no Arab shall pitch his tent there (Isa. 13: 17–22)? Then by the token of the fact, in spite of past destruction, that Arabs do now pitch their tents there and that the nations are presently planning to restore the great city, Babylon will be rebuilt and then again destroyed. Does another prophet say that in the last days "all nations" will be gathered together against Jerusalem and that at that time there will be a mighty earthquake (Zech. 14: 1–4)? Then, as surely as history tells of but one nation besieging Jerusalem in the days of Titus and there being no accompanying earthquake, Jerusalem will be built up and established and again besieged and destroyed. Does Christ speak of "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place" and foretell that immediately after this the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give her light (Matt. 24: 15–29)? Then, as surely as no similar portents occurred when the holy place was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, so surely must another desecrator appear and the temple with its holy place be erected, in order to make this profanation and its accompanying signs possible. And now does the angel bid John measure the temple of God and the altar, leaving out the court of the Gentiles (11: 1, 2)? Then, in the time contemplated by the Revelation, Jerusalem, the temple, the altar, the worship of Israel will be as they were, the old order being restored and renewed. In short, the geographic and historic setting of the day in which Christ lived and spoke and this Revelation was written will be completely re-established.

69

The instruction given to John to measure the temple, inclusive of the place occupied by its altar and worshippers (11:1), and the further instruction not to measure the outer court (11: 2), implies that, at the time in view, the Jews have been restored to their land and city, Jerusalem has come again into prominence, the temple has been rebuilt, the old-time temple service has been renewed and the distinction which existed in the Lord's day in regard to the temple as between Jews and Gentiles, there being a well-defined place for each, has been restored. This makes it clear — which the balance of the chapter confirms — that we are dealing with a scripture which is prophetically concurrent with Daniel 9: 27 and Matthew twenty-four. Manifestly, the last prophetic "week" has come, and indeed, the last half of that "week," that is, the last three and a half years, and hence, old-time conditions are again existing. · Deriving our thought from Daniel 9: 27, the Antichrist has restored the temple and its worship to the Jews — as Herod did in the past — and everything is thus prepared for the final scenes of apostasy on the part of Christless Jews and Gentiles, of faithful witnessing on the part of Christian Jews and Gentiles, and of the persecution of these last on the part of the Man of Sin. And the angel makes it plain to John how long the Gentiles, as empowered by the Antichrist, will tread under foot the court and the holy city, this being a space of forty-two months (11: 2) or a thousand two hundred and threescore days (11: 3), that is, three and a half years. All this is most important. The fact that the Gentiles are treading the temple court and holy city under foot (11: 2) shows that the policy of the Antichrist has here changed from favor to disfavor. In other words, the middle of the prophetic "week" has

been reached and the covenant with the Jews has been broken (Dan. 9: 27); and the time mentioned, namely, forty-two months, indicates that the middle of the "week" has been come to and that only three and a half years of Antichrist's activities remain to be fulfilled. We argue from this, and apparently, with correctness, that we have now reached in the record the last half of the seven years, and that what follows — from this chapter to the end of the nineteenth — has to do with the closing years of the Man of Sin and the great tribulation which he brings upon the earth (Matt. 24: 15–22). In other words — to repeat what was said in paragraph 60 — the thunder period ran the dividing line between the first and last halves of the "week," and hence, succeeding events are the summing up of God's dealings with sinful men within the final space of the present dispensation.

70

The two witnesses (11: 3–13) are probably Moses and Elijah. This conclusion is reached in view of the following scriptural indications: Moses and Elijah were the two witnesses who stood beside Christ on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. 17: 1–4), and it is thus probable that they were the two who stood beside the apostles on the Mount of Olives at the time of the Lord's ascension (Acts 1: 9–11). Again, the Old Testament prophesied that Elijah would return to earth before the coming of the Messiah (Mal. 4: 5, 6), and, while John the Baptist partly fulfilled this prophecy (Matt. 17: 9–13; Luke 1: 17), it is clear that he did not do so wholly (Matt. 11: 13, 14), which indicates first, that the prophet will yet appear, and, second, that there is no more likely place for him to do so than the one mentioned in this scripture. Again, both of these

prophets have bodies, which make their prophesied martyrdom possible (11: 7), Elijah never having lost his (2 Kings 2: 11) and Moses having been given back his at the mount of transfiguration (Luke 9: 30, 31; Jude 9). And finally, the record states that these prophets have power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy (11: 6), which Elijah did in his time (1 Kings 17: 1; Jas. 5: 17); and that they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to smite the earth with every plague (11: 6), which Moses did in his (Exod. 7: 17–21). If it finally proves true that Moses and Elijah are the two witnesses and thus that they revisit earthly scenes to lay down their lives in loving sacrifice to the Lamb of God, it will give us a new conception of the devotion of these saints, and also of the worthiness of Christ to receive the best which man may ever offer to Him.

71

It is evident from the mighty works which are performed by the two witnesses, recorded in the eleventh chapter (11: 3–6), that prophetic and apostolic conditions in respect to signs and wonders are, during the last years of the present dispensation to be largely restored. The scenes here described, the going forth of fire, the shutting of heaven, the turning of water into blood, and the smiting of the earth with plagues (11: 5, 6), remind one of Egyptian episodes and Palestinian experiences. There is, however, a noticeable difference between past manifestations and these, the present showing an increase in divine violence and destruction, this being particularly expressed by the words, " and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will " (11: 6). The occasion of this supernatural manifestation is, unmistakably, the development of the power of the

Antichrist, he having declared himself to be God (13: 4–6) and his false prophet having performed many miracles in his behalf (13: 11–15). God, therefore, more than duplicates these satanic displays, as He did in the time of Moses as related to Jannes and Jambres (2 Tim. 3: 8); and thus he strengthens the faith of persecuted and faltering saints. But it turns out to be a serious matter to witness against the Antichrist in the day of his permitted power, for the two prophets find that doing this, however great their miracle working, means the ultimate forfeiture of their lives. According to the record, when they have finished their testimony, the beast — the Antichrist — makes war against them, overcomes them and finally kills them, after which their bodies lie in the street of Jerusalem for three days and an half, while wicked men make merry over the fact that they have gotten rid of those who troubled them by their righteous words and acts. This rejoicing, however, is short-lived. For, on the third day, the Spirit of life from God enters into these martyred frames, they stand upon their feet, and, being called to heaven, they ascend thither in a cloud, all of their enemies beholding them (11: 1–12). We have rehearsed these events in detail because it is wholesome for us to dwell upon them. It is well to be reminded, first, that God has not lost His ancient power and can display the same at any time He may please; second, that there is ever a limitation upon mortal man in what he may do and be permitted to do against God's saints, it being seen here that the prophets who are empowered to kill are, finally, themselves killed; third, that God is manifestly sovereign in all His ways, He making choice of His two witnesses, establishing them as miracle workers of the highest order for a time, and then suddenly appointing them to suffering and death; and lastly, that apparent defeat of good by evil is only apparent and not a

reality, this triumphant Antichrist being permitted to work wickedness, but finding himself by so doing only the more deeply enmeshed within the divine toils. It is all a sad chapter, so far as the experience of the saints is concerned, especially as coming late in their experience. But, as it was in the past, so it is here; the process is to be judged in view of its result, and, while the one is dark, the other is infinitely bright (Heb. 12: 2; 2 Tim. 2: 12; 1 Pet. 4: 12–14; 2 Cor. 4: 17, 18).

72

The sounding of the seventh trumpet in chapter eleven is referred to in verse fifteen (11: 15). Its natural place would have been immediately after the sixth trumpet in the ninth chapter (9: 13). But the supernatural Spirit puts it in this place, subsequent to the interjected portion, because the blowing of the seventh trumpet is introductory to the vial and judgment periods, each of these falling under this trumpet. We judge by this that the sounding of the seventh trumpet is not a short, but a prolonged event, it being an episode of a major kind, inasmuch as there are many important experiences connected with it. A deduction from this is, that the phrase, "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound" (10: 7), does not imply that the "mystery" is finished at the first blast of the seventh trumpet, but rather at the commencement of its being blown as compared with its whole sounding. This commencement may be in itself a prolonged event, for the sounding reaches over both the vial and judgment periods, the last of which does not come to an end until the close of the millennium, as described in chapter twenty; (see the Analysis). We judge, therefore, that we are reaching now, in the divine record, the most dramatic and tragic series of events which pertain to the

years of the Antichrist, both in respect to the wicked and the righteous. As to the seventh trumpet (11: 15), there is good reason to believe that it is the "trump of God" of 1 Thessalonians (4: 16) and the "last trump" of 1 Corinthians (15: 52), this conclusion being reached by keeping in remembrance that the safe rule of scriptural interpretation is to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture, and also by noting the fact that there is no other series of trumpets spoken of in the Scripture by which to interpret the passages mentioned except the one found in the Revelation. This conclusion confirms the thought, since the 1 Thessalonian and 1 Corinthian passages manifestly concern the body of Christ, that the finishing of the mystery at the beginning of the sounding of the seventh trumpet (10: 7) refers to the completion of the church.

73

According to the words which immediately follow the phrase, "and the seventh angel sounded," God regards the sounding of that trumpet as that which leads up to and ushers in the millennial kingdom (11: 15). Hence it is, that great voices in heaven declare that "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and his Christ" (11: 15; see the Literal Translation). This does not mean that Christ's messianic kingdom actually comes here, for the subsequent record makes it plain that this event does not occur until the close of the nineteenth chapter. But, according to this divine foreview of events, God purposes under the seventh trumpet to establish the kingdom on earth, and, this being the case, He considers the thing as already done. Hence, he uses what grammarians call the historical present, putting the future tense into a present one, and thus speaking of a future event as a present fact.

The strong trend of the following chapters, therefore, is toward the realization of kingdom events, everything moving precisely and rapidly to this end. All this explains what is described in the following verses (11: 16–19). In these, the four and twenty elders fall upon their faces and worship God, giving Him thanks. In doing this, they present as the reason of their adoration the fact that the Lord has taken to Himself His great power, and has reigned. They further state that the nations were angry, that God's wrath has come, that the time of the dead that they should be judged and that reward should be given to the prophets, the saints, and those that fear His name, small and great. And finally they assert that the time has arrived when God is about to destroy the earth (11: 16–18). As will be seen, these phrases constitute a foreview of events which are described as taking place at the arrival of Christ (19: 1–21). In other words, we are considering the introduction to a description which is given in a later portion of the book, whose view is through the remaining three and a half years and to the end of that period of time. Notable then, is the verse which follows. This portrays the temple of God as being opened in heaven, the ark of God's testimony as being located within the temple, and lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail as proceeding from heaven (11: 19). These sights and sounds are God's token that the end of the dispensation is near at hand.

74

The twelfth chapter continues the introduction to the vial and judgment periods (see the Analysis). It begins by presenting to our view a great "wonder" (12: 1). This leads us to observe, as introductory to the interpretation

of this chapter, that there are three wonders spoken of in the Revelation. There is first, the wonder of the woman (12: 1); second, the wonder of the dragon (12: 3); and third, the wonder ("sign," in the Authorized Version) of the seven angels having the seven last plagues (15: 1). The word "wonder" or "sign" is from the Greek *sēmeion*, which is derived from *sēmainō*, which is from *sēma*, a mark. Thus *sēmeion* is an indication, and, scripturally speaking, a divine and supernatural one. Hence, it is a token, a miracle-sign, and thus a wonder. Now, all of these three signs come at the close of the prophetic "week," that is, within the space of the last three and a half years, when earthly events are rushing on, under the divine impulse, to their appointed end. They signify, therefore, that God is at this time interposing in the affairs of men in a new and striking way, making it plain to all by their arresting vividness that the hour of judgment upon the wicked is drawing near and that the stroke of justice is about to fall. All this reminds us of Matthew twenty-four, where heavenly portents, in the last three and a half years, rapidly multiply, leading up to the greatest of all signs, namely, that of the Son of Man (Matt. 24: 29, 30). We are to understand then, that God is giving us in this twelfth chapter a heavenly portrayal of an important kind, presaging great events which are about to come to pass.

75

It is generally admitted that the interpretation of the twelfth chapter, particularly that of the woman sign (12: 1, 2, 6), presents one of the most difficult of prophetical problems. The dragon sign does not offer any difficulty, for it is divinely interpreted, the Spirit giving the information that this beast stands for the "old serpent,

called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (12: 9). But no such interpretation is given concerning the woman sign, and we are thus left to our own consideration in seeking to understand the meaning of the same. In all pursuit of prophetic knowledge, we are to avoid imagination and keep to interpretation. Let us note then, what facts are before us in this chapter. First, the woman sign — and this is also true of the dragon sign (12: 3) — is not in itself a reality, but a sign of a reality, the sign being a vision and the reality being the object visioned. Second, the man-child which is born of the woman (12: 5) is evidently Christ, for He alone is destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron (12: 5; Ps. 2: 9; Isa. 11: 4; Rev. 2: 2, 7; 19: 15), and He alone was caught up to God and to His throne (12: 5; Acts 1: 9; 2: 23, 24, 30; Rom. 6: 4). Third, the woman in the first instance is the mother of Jesus, for it is affirmed that she brought forth the man-child (12: 2, 5). Fourth, it is manifest that the woman, as the mother of Jesus, is to be regarded, not so much from an individual standpoint as from a representative one, and, therefore, as a type, the "woman" afterwards flying into the wilderness (12: 6), which was typically true of Mary (Matt. 2: 11–15), but is here antitypically true of those whom she represents, namely, the people in view in this chapter. Fifth, these last mentioned people are beyond doubt those who live in the time of the Antichrist and in the last years of his reign, for they are said to be persecuted by the Man of Sin for "a thousand two hundred and three score days," or three and a half years (12: 3–6). Sixth, the people in mind are, like Mary, both Jews and Christians, being called "brethren" (12: 10), overcoming "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony" (12: 10, 11), and being identified with those who "keep the commandments of

God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (12: 17). Seventh, the persons involved in the prevailing persecutions are driven out of Jerusalem and Palestine into other lands and among Gentile nations, this last being signified by the use of the word "wilderness" (12: 6, 14), which is a word of contrast with the scriptural phrase which describes Palestine as "the land" (Gen. 12: 1–7). Eighth, there are those amongst the nations who receive, hold and protect these Jewish Christians, saving many from death, which is portrayed by the phrases, "they should feed her there" (12: 6) and "the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth" (12: 15, 16), this succoring going on for a "thousand two hundred and three score days" (12: 6) and "a time, and times and half a time," or for three and a half years (12: 14). And lastly, the persecuted saints are assisted, not alone by compassionate persons among the nations, but also by God Himself, this being indicated by the "two wings of a great eagle" (12: 14), the eagle being the sign of the divine presence and empowering (Deut. 32: 11, 12; Ps. 103: 5; Isa. 40: 31; Ezek. 1: 10; 10: 14; Rev. 4: 7). All this reminds one of the latter part of Matthew twenty-five (25: 31–46), and gives us the true setting and explanation of that passage. And the whole, apparently, is the sign-evidence of what Jewish Christians will be in the day here in mind, that is, in the time of Antichrist's persecutions. Accepting then, this interpretation of the sign of the woman, we may understand that God purposes to make these Jewish Christians, as the doers of God's will in the midst of great tribulation, His highly exalted ones, adorned with heavenly glory, having power over every natural force, and regnant, with Himself, over all places and dominions, these things being betokened by the symbolism of the first verse (12: 1). We

thus learn from this twelfth chapter that earthly experiences, as related to the saints, are set forth as drawing rapidly to an end, for the sign is the assurance that now, in a little while the Tarrying One will come (Heb. 10: 37), will rescue His darling from the lions (Ps. 35: 17), and will place her on high, His bride, wife, co-heir and co-ruler (2 Cor. 11: 2; Rom. 8: 17; Rev. 19: 7; 20: 4, 6). It is significant that there was given at the beginning of the Revelation a vision of Christ as highly exalted and dominant (1: 9–20); and that here in the middle of the book, concurrent with the self-deification of the Antichrist and the most fearful of his persecutions, a vision is granted of the church, especially the Jewish portion of it, as likewise exalted and dominant (12: 1). Such an identification in glory and power between the Head and the members is deeply humbling, and, at the same time, marvelously heartening.

76

Keeping in mind that the ascended Christ is the author of the Revelation (1: 1), it is evident that He believes in the glory as He did on earth that Satan is a real and demoniacal person (12: 7–9). According to the record, this august but dreadful being moves to and fro in the evil drama and tragedy of these scenes, the most potent and sinister personage to be observed. His name, in its several forms, actually occurs thirty times, and there is scarcely a chapter wherein his dreadful face is not seen, either in the foreground or background. As elsewhere in Scripture (Job 1: 6; Eph. 2: 2; 6: 12), he has set his throne only a little below that of God and he dominates the forces of evil spirits with master-mind and almost infinite power (Eph. 6: 10–12). In the closing scenes, he produces as a last master-stroke a trinity of evil in imitation of the Trinity

of good, himself in the place of God, the Antichrist in the place of Christ and the false prophet in the place of the Holy Spirit; and strangely enough, where men have found it impossible to believe in the divine Trinity, they seem to have no difficulty in accepting this satanic one (13: 1–15). But according to the revelation, Satan, here as ever, can never go beyond the length of his chain. There is One whose throne is above his own, whose mind and power are wholly infinite, who dominates evil forces as well as good, and who, at last, brings this monster of iniquity to his knees and casts him down forever (12: 7–9; 20: 1–3, 7–10). In view of the Devil's end, it is finally seen that the worst that he can do to the one whose life is hid in Christ — as Jesus said (Matt. 10: 28) — is to destroy his body; and even this he fails to do in the ultimate sense, for the visions of this book pierce beyond the veil and reveal, at last, all of the saints, including the martyr throng, in glorified bodies and bearing the image of God (21: 3–5).

77

It is to be kept in view, in reading the twelfth chapter, that Satan's present dwelling place is not Hades, but heaven. This accounts for the war between Michael and his angels and the dragon and his angels being fought in heaven (12: 7–12). In corroboration of this it is to be observed that the Spirit declares that Satan is the prince of the power of the air, which is heaven (Eph. 2: 2), and that the principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and wicked spirits, are all located with him in heavenly places (Eph. 6: 12 R. V.). The heaven which Satan and his followers occupy is not the first one of the clouds (Acts 1: 9), nor the third one where Christ is and to which Paul went (2 Cor. 12: 24) — which is the highest

one (Eph. 4: 10) — but that one which lies between these two, where the planets circle in their courses and which the Spirit calls the "air" (Eph. 2: 2; 1 Thess. 4: 7; Rev. 9: 2; 17: 17). It is to this place then, that God sends Michael and his angels and where the great, heavenly battle is waged (12: 7). The divine purpose of the battle is to dispossess Satan and his angels of their high vantage place, where they have ruled over the affairs of this earth so long and successfully (2 Cor. 4: 4; Eph. 2: 2), and thus to cast them down, first, to earth (12: 9, 12), afterwards, into the abyss (Matt. 25: 41; Rev. 20: 3), and finally, into the lake of fire (20: 10). These last statements make it manifest that God preserves His right of choice in act and process to the end of His dealings with Satan and his angels. Thus, though he has allowed him and them to exist and largely to have their way for thousands of years past, He now deals with them in judgment, not in an instant of time, but gradually, in successive stages, and only finally, when He has accomplished through them great and time-consuming events of judgment toward men which it is His purpose to bring to pass. Satan has pitched his throne high; but God has placed His higher. Satan is mighty; but God is Almighty. Satan can destroy; but God can destroy the destroyer. Satan is free; but God will shut him in, at last, so he may never more harm or even touch His holy ones. In His own time, therefore, God will indisputably enthrone Himself by indisputably dethroning Satan. All this was the vision Christ had when He was on earth, when He said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10: 18); and again, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12: 21); and again, "The prince of this world is judged" (John 16: 11). To the eternal Christ, Satan's downfall was already visible and accomplished. But for mortal men,

time had to pass. So it is that it is here, in this twelfth chapter and in these last three and a half years of the reign of the Antichrist, that the event is seen as actually accomplished. But even here, it is to be remembered, we have only the introductory foreview of the event. The real fulfillment of it is later, in the vial period, which is described from the beginning of the sixteenth chapter onward.

78

The thirteenth chapter continues the introduction, giving us a further foreview of the vial and judgment periods; (see the Analysis). It brings John into view, he having passed in spirit, from heaven (4: 1) to Jerusalem (11: 1), and from thence, presumably, back to Patmos and to the sands of the sea there (13: 1). Here the apostle is granted a new vision, as he looks out upon the waters of the great sea (the Mediterranean), beholding, as he gazes, a beast, rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads ten crowns, and upon his heads the names of blasphemy (13: 1). This beast has the form of a leopard, his feet are like the feet of a bear, and his mouth is as the mouth of a lion. To this monster the dragon gives his power, his throne, and great authority (13: 2). Finally, one of the beast's heads is wounded unto death, but the deadly wound is healed (13: 3). Now, here too we must beware of imagination and keep to interpretation. And both are possible, for the Spirit gives us the key to a rightful understanding of the personality of the beast in the verses which follow. We are told in these that "there was given to the beast a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months" (13: 5). Also, it is said that "he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme

his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven" (13: 6). Also, it is declared that "it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (13: 7). Such words as these only fit and describe one personality mentioned in Scripture, namely, the one of whom Paul speaks in much the same language (2 Thess. 2: 3–12), that is, the Antichrist. This monster of iniquity then, is seen rising up out of the Gentile nations -- the sea standing for "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (17: 15) — and is described as being at the head of ten kingdoms (13: 1; 17: 12), as having great wisdom and power (13: 1), and as being the personification of blasphemy (13: 1, 6; 2 Thess. 2: 3, 4). Moreover, the vision discovers this beast as one who demands the worship of the saints (13: 8), and also, when such worship is refused, as their arch persecutor (13: 7–10). We have before us, therefore, a detailed picture of the conditions of the great tribulation: the time being the last three and a half years; there being in existence a ten-fold political confederation, of which the Antichrist is the head (17: 1); it being the time of man's exaltation and blasphemy, God being defied by the Antichrist and his followers (13: 6); and it being a period when the saints witness against the Antichrist and when many suffer agony and death for so doing (13: 7, 8). When we come to the vial period description, these events being there described as actually taking place, much of this will be repeated. But here, we are granted, with John, to see from afar the gleam of the tribulation fires which will finally be lighted and which will develop into a world-wide conflagration (13: 7–10).

79

The latter half of the thirteenth chapter, (13: 11–18) is taken up with the description of "another beast," who rises from "the earth" that is, from the land of Palestine (13: 11), instead of from "the sea" (13: 1), that is, from some Gentile nation, and who is for this reason, as may be supposed, not a Gentile like the Antichrist (see Paragraph 37), but a Jew. This second monster is similar in character and purpose to the first, which is the occasion of his bearing the same name of "beast." But he has this peculiarity, that while he speaks as a dragon, he has "two horns like a lamb" (13: 11), which indicates that his appearance and pretension, along with satanic characteristics and energy, will be altogether innocent and peaceable (2 Cor. 11: 14). But the saints are given to understand that he has full and close alliance with the "first beast," namely, the Antichrist, and that he is on earth for no other purpose than to be the defender and propagator of his fame and interests (13: 12). As God permitted Jannes and Jambres to exercise great power on behalf of Pharaoh (2 Tim. 3: 8), so also here He allows this false prophet to do "great wonders," so that he makes fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men and deceives those who dwell upon the earth by means of the miracles which he has power to do in the sight of the beast (13: 13, 14). He is even permitted, finally, to bring to pass that which godless science has sought after but never accomplished, namely, to give life to an inanimate thing. First, he constructs an image, and then he makes it speak, foisting this representation of the Antichrist upon the credulity of men and demanding — as Nebuchadnezzar did in his day (Dan. 3: 1–7) — that all shall bow and worship the image which has been so made and vitalized, meting out death to those who

refuse to worship it (13: 14, 15). Having proceeded as far as this, this dreadful trinity of evil, the dragon, the Antichrist and the false prophet, combine to bring the whole world into subjection, fixing marks upon the right hand or in the forehead of both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, and not permitting any man to buy or sell save that one who has this mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name (13: 16, 17). The Spirit then gives us the true number of the "first beast," that is, the Antichrist. This is not the number of deity which we may surmise is 777, this expressing a perfect completeness, but that of a man, that is, 666, which expresses a perfect incompleteness. As to the image, there is little doubt about the fact that it is the one to which the Lord referred in Matthew twenty-four, in the phrase, "abomination of desolation" (24: 15). This image, as we learn from that passage, is located in the holy place of the restored temple, and the false prophet here sets it forth, as representative of the Antichrist and as worthy of divine honor and adoration (13: 12–15). That men should worship such a false and diabolical object is almost beyond belief. But Paul declared that it would be so (2 Thess. 2: 3–12), John here reiterates the fact (13: 12), and those who have eyes to see may observe that many forces in these present days are making strongly in such a direction. We have thus given to us, through the foreview of this introduction, a characterization of the last three and a half years of Antichrist's rule. He has deified himself, he has displaced Christ from the esteem of men, he demands the worship which alone should be given to God, and he exercises diabolical authority over the whole earth.

80

It is a remarkable historical fact that, while the Roman Empire at its dissolution lost its political unity, it has never lost its spiritual entity. To learn about the Empire, one must, of course, turn back to ancient history. And yet the newspaper last from the press, in its European columns, will present to the reader the country and people of that Empire as in present existence and activity. In other words, political Rome ceased to be, but moral Rome continues to live. This is true in two particulars: first, in spite of the constant change in European national life, the ten-fold order of the Roman Empire has largely been maintained; and second, the racial and social characteristics of its people have unalterably been manifested. As to the first, if one takes ancient and present day maps of Europe for study, it will soon be discovered that the Roman ten-fold aspect has continued in approximate evidence, and also, that the effect of the late war has been to bring the nations visibly nearer the ancient division of states. And as to the last, wherein did the grasping, gripping and grinding process of the late war differ from what was the political meat upon which Rome's great Caesars fed? The vision of Daniel concerning Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome showed a steady downward progress in the image to the ten toes of its feet (Dan. 2: 25–43), and this has indicated to some interpreters that the fulfillment of that vision was wholly and finally reached in Rome's ten-fold subdivision. This conclusion, no doubt, is in part true. But a larger truth lies in the interpretation of that image, which is not so often recognized. As a matter of fact, as we have said, Rome has never ceased to exist, for the Roman elements are all of them still in force. Hence, the ten toes of the image, prophetically and accurately speak-

ing, have never yet been developed. Rome taught the world how to war, and having conquered, how to rule with a rod of iron. And the nations of Europe, through their Attilas, Napoleons and Kaisers have put into effect the lesson learned. And, to this day, the nations know no other way of ruling, in spite of the efforts of altruistic theologians and statesmen. Thus it is that Rome's political principles remain in force. And so it will continue, till the whole dreadful system is headed up in the Antichrist, the ten kings having given their power to him (13: 1–6; 17: 7–13). Then, the world will see once more a ten-fold imperial Rome; and then Europe and finally the whole earth will have an emperor whom it may worship both as man and god (13: 4). The world will demand in that day a superman. And it will have it, only by and in the power of him whom the Holy Spirit calls the dragon (13: 1, 2). It will be then, for the first time, that the toes of the image will have their climacteric fulfillment. It will be then also, that the God of heaven will set up His kingdom which will never be destroyed (Dan. 2: 44, 45). At that time, God's own Superman will have come; and, for the first time in the history of the world, a King will rule in righteousness (Isa. 32: 1, 2; Ps. 72: 1–19).

81

Those who interpret the Scriptures, when this is possible, in a literal manner, have little difficulty with most of its passages, for such persons find their greatest satisfaction in accepting these as they have been written. But there are some interpreters of this kind who hesitate to believe that the description given in chapter thirteen, concerning the mark which the Antichrist is to fix upon either the hand or forehead of his followers (13: 16, 17; 16: 2), is to be

understood as foretelling what will be an actual experience. There is, however, no reason for thinking that this description is symbolical; and there is much reason, both from past and present experiences, for concluding that what is prophesied will actually take place. As confirmatory of this last, we quote an article by D. M. Panton, which recently appeared in the London "Christian" (issue of February 8, 1923), and which was based upon information presented by the "Daily Mail" (issue of July 24, 1902).

"The Roman Catholic Church in France is constantly threatened by almost countless dangers, but by none more powerful than by that extraordinary secret society known to its members as the F. D. L. C., which being interpreted stands for Les Frères de la Cote (The Brothers of the Coast).

"Few Englishmen, and not many Frenchmen either, for the matter of that, have ever heard of this remarkable Society. Its members, to the number of two and a half millions, consist entirely of boys from the ages of fourteen to twenty. The Society has two objects in view. First and foremost, they are bound together for the propagation and encouragement of atheism and the destruction of the power of the Papal Church. On the arm of each member is tattooed in large print the letters A. D. signifying Anti-Dieu. So powerful are the Brethren of the Coast, that discipline (in their schools) is made a practical impossibility, though to their credit let it be said that, if they are generously and kindly treated, they behave themselves, and confine their attention entirely to the propagation of pure and unadulterated atheism.

"The punishment meted out by the Society to those of its members who break their vows is terribly severe. The most disgusting and ignominious barbarities are resorted to. Sometimes the lobes of the ears are cut; at others a great cross is scratched on the sinner's arm with a penknife; while if his offence be small, he is merely fined. But just as the vows are terrible, so are the punishments for breaking them cruel and severe. Punishment, however, is rarely resorted to, for the Brethren of the Coast are more than loyal to their Society and their oaths.

"The Society is controlled by three so called 'chiefs,' who have their headquarters in Paris. The head chief, who is practically a

despot, is unknown to all the two-and-a-half-millions of members save the second chief. Through this second chief he issues his decrees, and no one else is even cognizant of his name. So far, the priests have been powerless to put down this extraordinary, this terrible institution. Indeed, not only is Roman Catholicism threatened, and dangerously threatened by this remarkable Brotherhood, but the movement presents a menace to the entire Christian world.

"Each member, in addition to having his arm branded with the letters A. D., wears a badge in the shape of a red moon, and the local chiefs bear distinguishing tattoo marks on their right hands."

The only comment which it is necessary to make upon the above startling statement is, that what is may be again, and what is in the lesser degree may likewise be in the greater.

82

As 10: 7 is the pivotal verse in the book as related to the time of the resurrection and translation of the saints, so 14: 1–20 is the pivotal chapter as related to the same. This chapter has to do with the seventh trumpet, and describes the transference of the church from earth to heaven (14: 1–5, 14–16). If then, we may locate the chapter in the prophetic plan, we shall be able to understand when the church will be completed and the resurrection and translation will take place, not, of course, as to time — which is hidden in the counsels of the Father (Matt. 24: 36; Mark 13: 32; Acts 1: 7) — but as to its relationship to other events. Nor is this locating so difficult as it appears, provided we keep in view the position in the Analysis which the chapter occupies. First then, it is to be observed that the chapter is divided into three parts, which may be described, in the phraseology of Leviticus, as follows: first, the first-fruits (14: 1–5); second, the harvest (14: 14–16); and third, the vintage (14: 17–20). Second, it is to be observed that the chapter's general presentation is, the

coming of Christ for and with His saints, because, however the first-fruits part is to be explained, the harvest part is certainly to be interpreted as describing the coming for, and the vintage part, the coming with. Third, it is to be observed that the vintage part is the scriptural equivalent of the judgment of the nations recorded in the nineteenth chapter (19: 11–20), and, therefore, does not find its fulfillment in the fourteenth chapter, this being a prophetical view of what takes place in the nineteenth. Fourth and lastly, it is to be observed, the vintage part being a foreview of the nineteenth chapter, that it follows that the harvest and first-fruits parts are also foreviews of the same chapter. In other words, the fourteenth chapter is, as the Analysis indicates, an introduction to the vial and judgment periods (see the Analysis), being the prophetic portrayal of events which do not actually occur in the fourteenth chapter, but at a later period, namely, at the time indicated by the nineteenth. This view of the fourteenth chapter as related to the nineteenth, explains why there is a duplication of events in the two chapters, the one being the foreview and the other its fulfillment. It also makes clear several important facts, as follows: first, that the nineteenth chapter is under the seventh trumpet; second, that it is there that the Lord comes for His saints (10: 7; 14: 14; 19: 1–9); third, that it is there that He comes with His saints (19: 1–16); and fourth and lastly, that the second coming of Christ is not disjointed — as if seven or more years were between the coming for and coming with — but rather, is one continuous event.

83

The questions, Who are the one hundred and forty-four thousand mentioned in the seventh chapter (7: 1–8),

and, What is the meaning of the scene portrayed in connection with this company as described in the fourteenth (14: 1–5), are two of the most difficult problems which present themselves in the book of the Revelation. There are, however, some statements concerning the subject, as based upon the record, which may be made with a good deal of certainty. These are as follows: First, the persons described are Jews, for they are sealed from the twelve tribes of Israel (7: 1–8). Second, they are Christians, for they are described as the "servants of our God" (9: 4); as those who have "the seal of God on their foreheads" (9: 4); as those who have the Lamb's "name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads" (14: 1); as those "that had been purchased" — by, of course, the blood of Christ — "out of the earth"; as those "that were not defiled with women, for they are virgins"; and as those "that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (14: 4). Third, miraculous favor is shown to them (7: 1–3). Fourth, divine protection of a peculiar kind is given to them, for, while death is permitted to overcome their fellows, it is not allowed to touch them (9: 1–5). Fifth, they "were purchased" — by the blood of Christ — "out of the earth" (14: 3). Sixth, they "were purchased from among men, to be the first-fruits unto God and unto the Lamb" (14: 4). Seventh, "in their mouth was found no guile; they are without blemish" (14: 5). And eighth and last, they are suddenly seen on the heavenly Mount Zion, having passed through the tribulation, standing with the Lamb before the throne and singing a new song, which no man could learn, with a voice of many waters and as the voice of a great thunder and as of harpers harping with their harps (14: 1, 2). The Holy Spirit gives this much, but no more. It is not unlawful, however, to venture making, on the basis of what is revealed, a single deduction. If our

assumption to the effect that the fourteenth chapter is a prophetic foreview of the nineteenth is a correct one, then we may conclude, since thus the earlier parts of the chapter describe the coming of Christ for His church, that the one hundred and forty-four thousand are a first-fruits company of translated Jewish saints, who immediately precede the general harvest of resurrected and translated ones, this honor being granted to them presumably on account of their having witnessed face to face against the Antichrist and of their having chosen in earth's darkest hour to follow the Lamb whithersoever He might lead them. If this is true, the following interesting facts are brought to light: the oracles of God were given first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles (Rom. 3: 1, 2); Christ came first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles (Matt. 2: 1; 15: 21–28); the Holy Spirit was sent first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles (Acts 2: 1–5; 10: 1, 44); Christ commanded that His gospel should be proclaimed first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles (Matt. 10: 5, 6; 28: 19); Paul preached first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles (Acts 13: 44–48; Rom. 1: 16); and now, Christ calls to Himself first a small Jewish company of saints, and then the larger company of Jewish and Gentile ones. But this last is mentioned as a prophetic possibility, and not, in any sense, as an established prophetic fact.

84

As a further proof that Matthew twenty-four and the central portion of the Revelation (chapters 6 to 19) are concurrent, both in time and matter, it is to be noted that each speaks of a gospel-preaching period in the midst of the seven years of the Antichrist, and that each is connected with the time of the end. In Matthew twenty-four the phraseology is as follows: "This gospel of the king-

dom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (24: 14); and in the Revelation, it is as follows: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (14: 6, 7). In the Matthew passage Christ declares, as soon as the gospel has been preached during the period referred to, that the end will come. In the Revelation passage, the Holy Spirit makes it plain that the angel with the everlasting gospel — he being the heavenly token of what the saints are doing on earth — flies through the heaven at the time when men are being tempted to worship the beast and his image, and to receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands (14: 6–11), which is the same end-time to which the Lord refers, as recorded in Matthew (24: 13–15). The two scriptures set forth the fact, therefore, that there is to be a declaration of warning and grace in the days of the Antichrist, which will have special reference to the particular temptations then in force (14: 9–11) and which will be a special preparation for entrance into the coming kingdom (Matt. 24: 14). We may believe, as Antichrist's beguilements will be world-wide (13: 5–8), that the proclamation of the evangel will likewise be world-wide (14: 6). In this case, we are probably within right reasoning when we conclude that God, at this time, will move mightily in the hearts of men, in both convicting and convincing power, and that He will thus match and overmatch the deadening and destroying work which Satan will be doing. It is probable that the particularly active agents in this world-wide preaching will be those Christian Jews

who, being persecuted by the Antichrist, will be driven out of Palestine into the four corners of the earth, and who, even as they flee, will testify against the Man of Sin and call men to repentance and salvation (Acts 8: 1–4; 12: 6–11).

85

The fourteenth chapter contains two verses which are most important, both in respect to interpretation and episode. We refer to verses twelve and thirteen (14: 12, 13). Here we are told that it is in the periods of the vials and judgments — this being the foreview of it — that the " patience of the saints " will specially appear (14: 12), and that blessed are the dead who " die in the Lord, from henceforth " (14: 13), both verses being suggestive of what was said in the previous chapter, when the Spirit was warning all those, in these anti-Christian days, who would be tempted to persecute the saints (13: 10). As for interpretation, it is clear that the phraseology is specifically Christian, the sentence, " die in the Lord " (14: 13) not being applicable to any other persons than those who are members of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 15: 18; 1 Thess. 4: 16). And as for episode, it is plain that the time in view is one of special persecution, testing, suffering and martyrdom; in other words, that of Antichrist's utmost activity of hatred and vengeance against the saints (14: 12, 13). In confirmation of this last statement several things may be noticed. First, the word " patience " (13: 10; 14: 12) is from the Greek noun, *hupomonē*, which is derived from the verb *hupomenō*, which signifies, literally, to stay under. Thus, " patience," in the Greek meaning of the word, signifies a staying under, or endurance. This suggests that the patience referred to is an endurance which has to be exercised in the midst of and in opposition to

great obstacles; and it is clear from the context that these are those which are connected with the Antichrist's persecutions. Second, the phrase, "blessed are the dead" (14: 13), suggests persecution unto death, that is, martyrdom, which reveals the fact that many saints, during the last three and a half years of the seven-year period of the Antichrist, will be called upon to seal their faith with their blood (14: 12). And lastly, the phrase, "from henceforth" (14: 13) manifests the fact that the pronouncement of blessing which God makes in respect to the martyred ones is not a general one, as if it were related to all martyrs of all time, but a special one, as related to these of a particular time, who will die for the sake of Christ from this time onward. This last casts a lurid glare, in respect to the saints, over these days of life and experience, for it reveals the fact that the persecution of the Antichrist will be so terrible as it reaches its climax that it will be more tolerable to die than to live, and thus, that the supremely blessed and happy persons will be, not those saints who are living, but those who are dead. It is all mysterious beyond understanding what God appoints, now and hereafter, to His loving and devoted servants. But, however strange the process, the issue here is certain and glorious: "Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (14: 13).

86

The personage referred to in the fourteenth verse of the fourteenth chapter is not the Son of man but one "like" Him (14: 14). But this one, being like Him, represents Him. Also, it is evident that the personage does this in respect to the Son of man's second advent, for he is seen sitting upon a cloud, wearing a golden crown and bearing

in his hand a sharp sickle (14: 14), which details point forward to Christ's coming return in glory (Acts 1: 9–11; Rev. 19: 12; Joel 3: 13). The fact, however, that the personage is not the Son of man, but only like Him, proves beyond doubt that the passage does not describe the second advent as here taking place. What it does is to prefigure this event. It is thus that we have the event itself described later in the Revelation, in the nineteenth chapter (19: 11–15). The whole portrayal of the fourteenth chapter, therefore, is a foreview of what comes afterwards. This again confirms our thought that this fourteenth chapter is introductory to the vial and judgment periods, and particularly to the judgment period, its finger-point being toward the great events which are described as taking place in chapter nineteen. We are thus led to call attention to what follows the fourteenth verse (14: 14), this being a setting forth, under the figure of a vintage-scene, of the terrible events of judgment which will be connected with the second coming, God's wrath being poured out upon the beast and his armies until the blood stands up to the horses' bridles — as occurred more than once in the late world war, great streams being turned into blood — even to the space of a thousand and two hundred furlongs, that is, for over one hundred and eighty-three (183.86) English miles (14: 17–20). Here again, there is an exact parallelism between this chapter and the nineteenth, for as this scene of judgment (14: 17–20) succeeds the one which sets forth him who is like the Son of man and who comes upon the cloud of heaven (14: 14–16), so there follows a description of the white horse warrior (19: 11–16) a similar judgment scene, involving the same persons and ending in the same catastrophe of destruction (19: 17–21).

87

In considering now the fifteenth chapter, we are to remember that we are still dealing with the introduction to the vial and judgment periods; (see the Analysis). We are to remember also, as has been made manifest, that the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth chapters are specially related to the vial period, and the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters, to the judgment period. We feel justified in making these distinctions on the basis of the internal evidence of these passages, and we are persuaded that a close observation of their contents will confirm this view. The fifteenth chapter, therefore, is to be connected in mind with the fourteenth, as a part of it and a development from it. Here, as is the case with the other introductions, it is to be observed that it is a foreview of the events which are afterwards described as belonging to the period of which it is a part. That is, the chapter anticipates, as did the fourteenth, those episodes which are described in the judgment period, portraying these from a divine and heavenly point of view. This is the explanation of why it begins with a sign, or wonder; (see Paragraph 72). As the twelfth chapter was introduced with a sign, namely, that of the woman (12: 1), which had reference to the vial and judgment periods, but specially, to the former of these, so it is that this fifteenth chapter is introduced with a like sign or wonder, namely, that of the seven angels having the seven last plagues (15: 1), which has special reference to the judgment period, now about to begin. It is to be kept in mind also, that these signs, or wonders mark off these vial and judgment periods as being the most tragic of all of the five which are related to the Antichrist (see Paragraph 72), they signifying the climax of man's earthly sin and the culmination of God's earthly punishments.

88

The vision following the two signs of the twelfth chapter was that of the "woman," that is, the church in its Jewish aspect, fleeing into the "wilderness" and being persecuted there, largely unto death (12: 1–17). The vision following the sign of the fifteenth chapter is that of this company of persecuted and martyred ones established in heaven, victorious over the beast, over his image, and over the mark and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, and singing the song of Moses the servant of God (Exod. 15: 1–19) and that of the Lamb (15: 1–4). This then is the third vision which we have had of martyred saints in heaven. The first followed the wars which the Antichrist carried on in the first part of the first half of the prophetic "week" (6: 9–11; see Paragraph 43); the second succeeded the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand and the persecution of these in the second part of the first half of the "week" (7: 9–17; see Paragraph 50); and now this new one, comes after the greatly intensified persecution of the saints in the first part of the second half of the "week" (see Paragraph 51). These three visions, as will be seen, are of different and separate companies of the martyred ones. But it is to be observed that there are similarities of characteristic which wonderfully unite the three, and, in doing so, greatly encourage faltering hearts. First, as the martyrs' portion on earth is one of sorrow, so in heaven it is one of joy; second, as their suffering on earth is for Christ, so their comforting in heaven is by Christ; third, as their martyrdom on earth means crying and moans, so their experience in heaven means singing and praise; and lastly, as the yielding up of their lives on earth means humiliating defeat, so the taking up of their lives in heaven means

exalting and compensating victory. We learn thus, that God gives the double, not only in judgment, but also in reward. For it is evident, in the day of recompense, that He will forget nothing and will remember everything, and that He will multiply heavenly compensations beyond all earthly losses. Surely, it is well worth while to serve, suffer and, if need be, die for such an One as Christ. This is what this fifteenth chapter assures us, for these tribulation saints find, when finally they rest from their labors and are with the Lord, that He pours upon their heads the tears which He has kept in His bottle (Ps. 56: 8), and, in doing so, transforms them into a fragrant and healing oil (Ps. 23: 5; Isa. 61: 1–3).

89

Some interpreters have made much of the phrase in the fifteenth chapter, " the song of Moses, the servant of God " (15: 3), and this in seeking to establish the fact that those who sing this song are not Christians, but only Jewish tribulation saints, it being pointed out that Moses' song was sung under the law and was not more than one of victory after a physical deliverance (Exod. 15: 1–19). But it is to be noted that such interpreters pass over the fact that those who sing the " song of Moses " also sing, " the song of the Lamb " (15: 3), which is certainly one of spiritual redemption (Eph. 5: 18–20; Col. 3: 15, 16). In other words, the same persons sing both the song of victory for physical deliverance and the song of praise for spiritual redemption. It is not correct to say, therefore, that the song is only one of law and for physical victory, for it is also one of grace and for spiritual redemption. Recognizing this two-fold fact, forbids our coming to the conclusion that these saints are only Jews and not Christians, and warrants the conclusion that they are both the one and

the other. And there is reason for their singing the two songs; for, as the followers of Moses sang of their deliverance from the persecutions of their antichrist, that is, Pharaoh, so these tribulation saints will sing of deliverance from the persecutions of their Antichrist, namely, the Man of Sin; and, as Christians, in these present days, sing in praise to Christ for their redemption through His precious blood, so these saints, in the days to come, will sing in praise to Him for their redemption through that same blood. These martyrs in heaven, therefore, look down and back, as a result of their earthly experiences, upon both a great deliverance and a mighty redemption; and, in consequence, their two-fold songs of praise fill the courts of heaven (15: 1–4). They are indeed, Jewish tribulation saints. But they are also, Christian Jewish tribulation saints.

90

It is conceded by scholars that the best reading of the phrase in the fifteenth chapter, "Thou king of saints" (15: 3), is, "Thou, king of the nations." This is the reading given by Dr. Eberhard Nestle in his text of the New Testament, which is founded on the three texts of Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort, and Bernard Weiss, and which is generally regarded by scholars as a standard resultant. It is also the reading in the margins of the Authorized and Revised Versions. Moreover, it is the reading which the context implies and thus calls for. This last conclusion is reached in the following manner: First, it is not conceivable that the phrase, "king of saints," is to be found in the New Testament, for Christ is never called the "king" of the church, but rather and always, her "Lord." And second, it is not likely that He would here be designated as "the king of the ages" — as some manuscripts suggest

and as the Revised Version maintains — for the idea of an eternal, or even, a many-age kingship is not in view in the words of the passage, but rather, that to which the kingly office of Christ is scripturally related, namely, a rule over the Jews, and through the Jews, over the Gentile nations, and each in and through the period of the millennium. It is this last-named time which will bring into vision the kingly quality, position, reign and glory of Christ, and this in a double connection, first, as "king of the Jews" (Ps. 72: 1–19; Isa. 32: 1–20; Matt. 27: 37) and second, as "king of the nations" (Joel 3: 1–17; Zech. 14: 1–9; Rev. 15: 3, margin). This particular verse (15: 3) specifies Christ's kingship over, not the Jews, but the nations, for it is one which looks forward to the judgments which God is about to mete out upon the Antichrist as king of the ten kingdoms (17: 12, 13) and thus upon the nations which are under his sway and are fulfilling his wicked behests (17: 14). Hence it is that these martyr ones in glory, who shortly before were done to death by the Man of Sin and his followers, look forward to the speedily approaching time when Christ will declare Himself "King of kings and Lord of lords" (17: 14; 19: 16), and thus they praise His "works" and "ways," hailing Him not only as "Lord God Almighty," but also as "king of the nations" (15: 3). It will not be long now, in the unfolding of our studies, before God will place His Son upon His rightful throne. The series of judgments described in the fifteenth chapter, as well as those which are described in the succeeding chapters, prepare the way for this exaltation.

91

In coming now to the sixteenth chapter, we reach the next time-period, namely, that of the seven vials; (see the

Analysis). All of these seven vials are mentioned in this chapter (16: 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 17), so that the passage presents a full description of the various events connected with their emptying. The vials themselves are probably the bowls which are related to the golden altar (1 Kings 7: 50; 1 Chron. 28: 17; 2 Chron. 4: 8; Zech. 14: 20), the heavenly imagery throughout this portion of Scripture being that of the temple, its articles, utensils and service (6: 9; 7: 15; 11: 19; 14: 15; 15: 2, 5, 6–8). This suggests that the judgments which are now poured out upon men, consequent upon the emptying of the bowls, are because of religious transgressions, many Jews and more Gentiles having combined to give the worship and service to Antichrist which is due alone to Deity (13: 5–8, 15; 14: 9, 10), and God punishing them accordingly (16: 1, 2). The Spirit thus establishes a distinction between the vial period and the following judgment period, the first having a markedly religious aspect and the second a markedly national and political one. The divine background of the seven vial-scenes is that of the heavenly temple. The satanic background of these scenes is that of the earthly temple at Jerusalem, restored, reorganized and revitalized, but given over to the worship and service of the Antichrist. Thus two religious systems are here in evidence, God's and man's, the true and the false; and, at this particular juncture, these two — the climax of divine and human affairs having been reached — come into open contact and conflict. The question is, which is the more stable and enduring? God answers this question, notably and finally. From this time on, it is a case of unfolding and intensifying judgment, and the divine answer, as to the preliminary of condemnation, is here given, it being seen in the outpouring of the seven vials and heard in the cries of condemned and suffering men (16: 2–11).

92

We called attention, in an earlier part of this exposition, to the fact that God, as far as possible, places mercy in the midst of judgment, with the intention of bringing men to repentance and salvation; (see Paragraphs 37 and 44). We see this principle of divine compassion exemplified in this sixteenth chapter, in connection with the outpouring of the seven vials described therein. For terrible as the judgments are, men being afflicted with noisome and grievous sores (15: 3), the sea being turned into blood (15: 4), the rivers and fountains of waters becoming blood (15: 4), and the sun scorching men with fire (15: 7), yet it is true that God restrains Himself in the midst of these manifestations, making the punishments, as compared with later ones, not general but partial, and not extreme but mitigated. But the recognition of this truth does not bring us to the end of what may be discovered in God's words and ways as here revealed. For clear as divine mercy is, it is equally clear that there is a great advancement here of meted-out judgment. The last passage in the record which particularly described divine punishment was in the sixth chapter, where we had occurring a great earthquake, the sun becoming black as sackcloth, the moon becoming as blood, the stars of heaven falling, and the mountains and islands being moved out of their places (6: 12–14; see Paragraph 44). But that past scene (16: 12–14) is almost as nothing in comparison with the present one (16: 1–8). And the difference is this: the first, is located in the first three and a half years, and the second, in the second three and a half; the first, before the Antichrist makes claim to deity and demands worship, and the second, after he does so; and the first, before men accept of the Man of Sin as the one worthy of worship and service, and the second,

after they do this. In other words, this sixteenth chapter is later in time and it sets forth a more developed condition of wilfulness in sin; and hence, God's punishments are wider in extent and more drastic in form and measure. We have not yet reached the end, in the record, either of grace or judgment. But this passage takes us a long way onward in the develoment of the one and the other. And if the earlier process of judgment is so dreadful, what will the full end be!

93

It would be a question with the average person, in studying this sixteenth chapter (16: 1–10), whether the description of divine punishments which is given in it is meant to be understood in a literal or symbolical sense; and it is probable that the same average person would conclude that a symbolic meaning is to be attached to it. The argument of such an individual, probably, would be this: first, God is a God of love and compassion and He does not willingly afflict, so that it is beyond imagining that He would actually put sores upon men's bodies, turn their water supply into blood and scorch them with the sun's heat; and second, the Revelation is a symbolical book and it is not to be turned into literal fact. But, before we allow ourselves to reach a conclusion of this kind, it will be well for us to bring into mind certain considerations, such as these: God is not only a God of love and compassion, He is also One of wrath (Rom. 2: 8, 9; Rev. 6: 17; 16: 1) and judgment (Exod. 12: 12; Rev. 14: 7); He has in times past meted out grievous punishments upon the bodies of men — some of which in the Old Testament were exactly similar to those described here (Exod. 7: 20, 21; 9: 8–11) — and a literal type, such as that of the judgment in Egypt, calls for a literal antitype; and finally, there seems good reason

to believe that the Revelation, while it contains symbolism, is not such a symbolical book as is generally supposed. As touching this last, we make free to say that the idea of symbolism, if loosely held, may be made a deadly enemy of true interpretation; and we make free to add that we believe that the application of this idea accounts for the largely prevalent misinterpretation of many otherwise markedly clear passages of Scripture. If this same spiritualizing process had been applied by the saints of old to the Old Testament prophecies, they would have had no before-hand belief in the threatenings of Moses and Aaron concerning Pharaoh and his followers, nor even in any one of the notable prophetic items which the Spirit recorded in respect to the earthly life of our Lord. And yet God proved, in time, that all of these were to be understood literally, that is, exactly as had been stated. We hold, for these reasons, that this sixteenth chapter is to be interpreted in a literal manner; and hence, we conclude that the events described will take place, actually and exactly, as they are portrayed. And we would add to this statement this more general one, namely, that it is our conviction that the only safe method of interpreting the Scripture as a whole, including the Revelation, is to give — unless the text or context wholly and absolutely forbid — a natural, and, therefore, literal meaning to it. To do this is consistency, as related to fulfilled prophetic passages, and sanity, as related to unfulfilled. Not to do it, is to lead to serious results, such as permitting interpreters to give rein to their imagination as to what may or may not be true; such as putting a premium upon natural scholarship as the basis of interpretation, which is not allowable (1 Cor. 1: 21; 2: 1–16); such as accepting the principle that the Word is only to be understood by the learned and few, whereas it is manifest that the Bible was written primarily

for the common people (Mark 12: 37) and is intended to be understood by the many (Acts 17: 11, 12); and finally, such as producing almost as many interpretations as there are interpreters, one man's imagination, in respect to any given passage, being as good as that of any other.

94

There are certain passages of Scripture which, from a natural standpoint, one would be glad to turn from, or, at least, gloss over. The one in the sixth chapter (6: 12–17), which has been commented upon (see Paragraph 44), is one of these; and the one before us in this chapter (16: 1–11) is another. What we are thinking of just now, is not so much God's terrible and vengeful anger against sinners, startling as this is, but rather, the attitude of such sinners toward God in the midst of punishment, though this be acknowledged by such as being most justly deserved. No person can study himself and men at large without becoming aware of the fact that the natural heart is past understanding in its hardness and bitterness as related to God's judgments. But most persons harbor the thought that divine judgment, if sufficiently severe, will break down the will and lead the soul, at last, to repentance. Hence, there is a general hope, even amongst Christians, that the fires of hell will refine and transform. But these sixth and sixteenth chapters point to an entirely different conclusion from this. In both passages, the fires of the nether world, as it were, are lighted before their time, and they burn fiercely enough — if such could produce repentance — to bring any man to his knees or any number of men to theirs. However, we watch in vain for such a result. In the earlier passage, men hide in the dens and rocks of the mountains and pray to the mountains and rocks to fall

upon them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb (6: 15, 16); and in this later one, they gnaw their tongues for pain and then blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pains and sores, and they repent not of their deeds (16: 10, 11). The truth of the matter is, there is a point where men, because of cherished and indulged sin, find themselves incapable of repentance; and it is clear that all men who are finally lost reach this place, some midway in life and some at its end. Moreover, it is apparent from this passage, as well as from other scriptures, that there is something self-perpetuating in sin and punishment. Here, these men are judged and punished because they are followers of the beast, or Antichrist (16: 10). But being judged and punished, they blaspheme God, which is further sin and which calls for further judgment and punishment. So sin may go on *ad infinitum;* and so judgment and punishment likewise may go on *ad infinitum.* It is sin which condemns the sinner; and it is sin added to sin, in this world or the other, which makes his condemnation endless.

95

Whatever men may think about demons, judging from the sixteenth chapter, God evidently believes in them (16: 13, 14). And here, He shows that they have a potent and far-reaching influence over earthly and human affairs (16: 14). According to the general testimony of Scripture, we may understand that these strange creatures are fallen (Mark 5: 8; Luke 8: 30), devilish (Matt. 12: 43–45; 1 Cor. 10: 19–21), and unincarnate (Matt. 8: 31, 32; Mark 5: 13; Luke 8: 33); and also that they are subject to Satan (Eph. 2: 2; 2 Chron. 18: 19–22), desirous of incarnation (Matt. 8: 30–32), and always intent upon de-

structive purposes (Mark 1: 25, 26; 9: 26; Luke 4: 29; Eph. 6: 12). In this passage, the emptying of the sixth vial sets free three unclean spirits, in the likeness of frogs, which emanate from the great trinity of evil — Satan, Antichrist and the false prophet — which work miracles, and which go forth to the kings of the earth to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty (16: 12–14). This is the day of which John speaks in the first chapter (1: 10), and which is the central theme of the Revelation (see Paragraph 16); and it is the one upon which God will take final and destructive issue with the Antichrist and his followers, in view of their impious ways. And our passage makes it unmistakably clear that the divinely permitted preparation for judgment upon these will be brought to pass by unseen and almost unknown beings, namely, demons. We do not well, therefore, to make light of the idea of a spirit-world, however its true character is travestied by present-day platform orators. This world is real, and it is nearer to us than we think. Also, it is powerful, not only over hell, but also, over earth, inclusive of many of the great personages of the earth. Moreover, it is present as well as future, the future condition as described in the text being but a development and culmination of what is now existing. This is the world which Christ understood so well and spoke of so often (Luke 9: 42; 11: 24); the one which Paul saw so clearly and dealt with so frequently (Acts 16: 16–18; Eph. 2: 1–3), the one which lies above and about us, influencing us easily and powerfully and only to be overcome by a Spirit greater than its lesser spirits (Matt. 12: 28; Eph. 2: 1–3; 6: 10–17). Incidentally, it is a sad commentary upon human government to discover, so late in the affairs of men, that the wicked spirits of this great other-world finally control the kings of the earth and lead them up

against God and His Anointed (16: 13, 14). This is a far cry from Cromwellian liberty and Washingtonian idealism; and it prophesies, not international evolution, but devolution.

96

The "yellow peril" is no political phantasy, but most real, as related to the present and future. Only the peril of the future is not only yellow, but also brown. In other words, according to the sixteenth chapter of this book (16: 12), there is to be in the last days a mighty uprising in the place of the sunrising, which will bring kings into vision who will have no kindly purposes toward those who live in the place of the sunsetting. In that day, at last, the east will meet the west, and this for deadly conflict. For the present, the issues between the west and east are, for the most part, moral and social. In that day, they will be these, and also, commercial and political. And then, what the west has sown, it will reap, with dreadful certainty and in terrible measure. For nearly two thousand years, westerners, by their civilizing without Christianizing, have scattered broadcast over those far-away lands the seeds of disbelief, so that Japan, Korea, China and India are rapidly going atheistic and agnostic. With then, no Christian faith to restrain, why should they not accept the mandate of the prince of the air and be led captive by him at his will? A man who is not under the law of the Spirit is under that of the flesh, and the flesh lusteth after the things of the flesh, in one form or another, through all the course of life. And what a man is, men are. Moreover, a nation is but a man multiplied. It is, however, with this difference; the many may combine, and, in the process, the power of the unit is increased by as many units as are added to it. The only question which

remains in diplomacy and war, after this, is that of comparative leadership and quantity. It is this aspect of things which led Napoleon to declare that God is always on the side of the greater number of battalions. So He is, generally, as things go naturally, simply because His laws are not usually abrogated — till the time of His judgment has come. Here then, is the realization of what the civilized world has dreaded so long, the marching westward of the uncivilized and godless eastern hordes. The occasion of it, invisibly, is the influence of the dragon (16: 13), and, visibly, the lust of conquest, particularly as related to Syria, Palestine and Jerusalem (16: 13, 14). This will be the time of Har-Magedon, or Armageddon, the plains of Esdraelon becoming the gathering place of the armies of the earth (16: 16). No battle is fought on that plain, but there they prepare for battle, marching then southward toward Jerusalem, and, as the record says, "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (16: 14). Their objective is to destroy the Jews, who have been restored to their land under the Antichrist and whose city has become a world-centre of commerce and wealth. But the day of the vengeance of God has come and they that touch Jerusalem touch the apple of His eye (Zech. 2: 6–8). So the Lord will go forth as in the day of battle, coming in might and great power; and the west and east together will find themselves in the deadly grip of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords (Zech. 2: 9–13; 14: 1–5). It is clear, therefore, that the late world war was not the "battle of Armageddon," which prophetic students knew from the first. This battle, which is really the battle of the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3: 1–8), lies not in Europe but in Palestine, and it is yet in the future. And hence it is plain also, that the League of Nations will not be able to keep peace on the earth. Whatever men of

peace in these times may do will eventually be undone, till the Prince of Peace has come. To the end of the age, it will be even as Jesus said: "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars" (Matt. 24: 6).

97

The introduction to the description of the various judgments is found from the eleventh through the fifteenth chapters, and particularly, in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters; (see the Analysis, and Paragraphs 65, 76). In reaching the seventeenth chapter, therefore, we find no introduction here inserted, but come at once upon the description. This brings us then, to the sixth time-period, namely, that of the seven judgments; (see the Analysis). These judgments are as follows: first, the judgment of religious Babylon (17: 1–18); second, that of commercial Babylon (18: 1–24); third, that of the church (19: 1–10); fourth, that of the Antichrist and the false prophet (19: 11–20); fifth, that of the nations (19: 11–21; 20: 1–9); sixth, that of Satan (20: 10); and seventh, that of the wicked dead (20: 11–15). All of these judgments have been prepared for by those of a preliminary and partial kind, as betokened by the seals (6: 1–17; 8: 1), trumpets (8: 7–13; 9: 1–21; 11: 15), thunders (10: 3, 4), and vials (16: 1–21). But now, the final judgment-acts of God have come, and from henceforth, there is for men neither mitigation nor escape. In all of the preliminary judgments, God has shown great mercy, not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3: 8, 9), for, in the very act of letting go the forces of destruction, He has restrained and moderated them, both in extensity and intensity (6: 8; 8: 7, 8–12; 9: 15, 18; 11: 13). Indeed, divine grace has gone so far as to secure a last world-wide preaching of the good

tidings, which has called men to repentance and has sought to prepare them for the coming King and kingdom (Matt. 24: 14; Rev. 10: 8–11; 11: 3–6; 14: 6, 7). But, in spite of these last acts of compassion, though they have been accompanied by the display of miraculous power (11: 5, 6), men's hearts — as was true in Pharaoh's time — have been increasingly hardened and turned against God, so that now, He has no other way to take but that of terrible and final judgment. It is evident, both from Scripture and history, that sinful men may reckon greatly upon God's patience. But trifling with divine mercy has a subjective result, which is generally unsuspected but is fearfully real, namely, the production in an unregenerate heart of a reprobate state. It is this which calls, finally, for a cutting short of grace and a letting fall of judgment. And this is what we have in the record, from this time onward. In succession, one following another in regular order, the six judgments which pertain to sinners take place; and each one puts the wicked who are involved beyond hope of recovery.

98

The seventeenth chapter, which records the first judgment, presents to us apostasy in its final and universal form (17: 1–5). Taking ancient Babylon, with its Baal system of worship, as the type of such, and the future restored Babylon, with its corrupted religiousness, as the representative of such, it portrays all of the apostate systems of the days of the Antichrist, however and wherever these may be found. Since Babylon is so definitely mentioned by the Spirit (16: 18, 19; 17: 5), we may be assured that that city is first in mind, and hence, that it will contain in the last days, in its reorganized condition,

every false religious system which men may devise, combined by the Antichrist, probably, into one. But it is plain that this literal Babylon, with its abounding apostasy, becomes at the time the progenitor and type of all apostasy throughout the world, and that thus the great western city, Rome, is also in mind. This seems quite certain in view of the fact that Babylon is not set upon seven hills, while Rome is (17: 7–9), and in view of the added fact that the description of the harlot woman is an exact one, outwardly and inwardly, of that master-production of apostasy, the Roman Catholic Church (17: 3–6), which has so long made its centre and seat at Rome. And yet, it should be kept in mind that Babylon does not stand for the Romish Church exclusively, in the sense that it is the only apostate church in view. Verse two (17: 2) indicates a state of Europe-wide, if not world-wide spiritual corruption, that is, one which extends beyond the Roman communion and is larger than its degeneracy. The Romish church, no doubt, is chiefly in view; but this, not in the exclusive sense, but in the inclusive, involving and comprehending all other apostasies which are like unto it, these being frequently spoken of, not only by John, but also by Paul and Peter (Acts 20: 28–30; 2 Thess. 2: 1–12; 1 Tim. 4: 1–3; 2 Tim. 3: 1–8; 2 Pet. 2: 1–3; 3: 1–7). In short, the scene is similar to what the late Mr. Stead presented in his widely circulated magazine, the English "Review of Reviews," when he soberly proposed a combination and co-ordination of all religious systems, leaving out in each the unimportant elements and keeping in the important ones, and putting all under the leadership of the pope of Rome. As it proved, Mr. Stead — though, unwittingly, he spoke prophetically — found himself before God's and man's time. But the divine, prophetic purpose in this direction will yet be fulfilled; and it is plain that

the Man of Sin will be the satanic agent who will bring it to pass. For it is to be remembered that this seventeenth chapter is a prophecy of the years of the Antichrist, as verse three indicates; and thus the apostasy in view is that which is consummated in his time and under his fostering care, the harlot woman going into place and power upon the back of the scarlet-colored beast (17: 3). It is a most solemn thought that the present-day efforts to bring to pass union between the great Catholic and Protestant churches, is — although this is not the intention of Protestant leaders — slowly but surely preparing the way for this last-time confederation of evil. Since church union may only be obtained by compromise with essential truth, it follows that the inevitable consequence of such must be spiritual corruption, which is apostasy.

99

It is not to be taken for granted, because the Roman Catholic Church is antichristian, that her pope is the Antichrist. There are many persons who believe that the Roman Church is the most antichristian religious system which Satan has introduced into the spiritual chaos of this present age. But not a few such hold, with apparent reasonableness, that the popes of Rome are to be excelled in evil by another person who is yet to come, namely, the Antichrist, who is to fraternize for a time with Rome, but, nevertheless, is to be separate from her (17: 3). Such interpreters acknowledge that there are great parallelisms between Rome and Antichrist. At the same time they believe, while every pope — because of the system he represents — is *an* antichrist, that no future one of these will be *the* Antichrist. The following considerations bring them to this conclusion: First, there were antichrists long

before the Roman Church had existence, for it is to be remembered that in the apostle John's days and thereafter there were many antichrists (1 John 2: 18, 22; 4: 3; 2 John 7), whereas the Roman Church did not begin in apostolic times but many scores of years afterwards. Second, the great historical antichrists, such as Caligula and Napoleon, were never popes of Rome and in some cases were the arch-enemies of the Roman Church. Third, the one chapter in the Bible which gives specific details concerning the union of Rome and the Antichrist, namely, the seventeenth of Revelation, shows a distinct difference between the two; the harlot being apostasy (including Rome), and the beast being the Antichrist, and she not carrying the beast — as would be the case if the beast were a pope — but the beast carrying her (17: 3); also the beast being a king who succeeds several other kings, not one of whom was a pope, and he himself being a reincarnated king who had lived and reigned before there was a Roman Church and there were popes (17: 8–11); and finally, the beast turning and rending the woman and continuing his existence without and apart from her (17: 16; 19: 19, 20). For these reasons, the scriptural and historical evidence seems to indicate, while Rome and the Antichrist in the last days will go into ecclesiastical and political power together, that each has its own position and sphere and meets end-time judgments different in time, place and kind (17: 16; 19: 19, 20). But, though Rome is not the beast, let no Protestant call her a "Christian church" or have fellowship with her as such. In view of the fact that her theological system holds and teaches the doctrine of justification by works, in spite of whatever truth she surrounds this false doctrine with, she is radically and irremediably opposed to Christ and His gospel, and hence, she is in a deep and abiding sense anti-

christian; and the Lord's message concerning any personage who represents such a system is, "Receive him not into your house and give him no greeting, for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" (2 John 7–11); and again, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (18: 4, 5).

100

The two Babylons described in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters, representing the two systems which first fall under God's judgment (see Paragraph 94), do not appear to be the same. They have some marks of similarity; but they have, also, certain definite ones of dissimilarity. As to likeness, they are both in the time and under the control of the Antichrist (17: 3, 7–14; 16: 10, 17–21); they are both lifted up in arrogance and blasphemy (17: 3; 18: 7); they are both guilty of shedding the blood of the saints (17: 6; 18: 24); and they both fall under the judgment of God (17: 1, 16, 17; 18: 2, 6–8). As to unlikeness, they bear different names (17: 5; 16: 19; 18: 2); they are, in part, in different localities (17: 9, 18; 18: 17, 21); they run different courses (17: 4, 5, 15, 18; 18: 3, 11–19); and they come to different ends (17: 16; 16: 17–21). They are the same then, in spirit, but they differ in development and in what they represent. "Mystery Babylon" is, in a special sense, Rome (17: 9, 18), and it stands first, for the apostasy which characterizes the Roman Catholic Church, and second, for all apostasy, whether Roman, Greek or Protestant Catholic, such as will prevail in the last days of this age. "Great Babylon" is evidently the ancient city which Nebuchadnezzar built

and named (Dan. 4: 28–30), which, in the record, is set forth as rebuilt and glorified. These cities — Rome and Babylon — will be two centres to which Antichrist will give his kindly favor and from which he will exert his powerful but corrupting influence over the kings and nations of the earth, the one from a religious standpoint and the other from a commercial one (17: 1–5; 18: 1–3). There will also be a third centre where he will fix his palace and display his glory, namely, Jerusalem (Dan. 11: 43–45). Possessing this trinity of cities, upheld by Jews and Gentiles, governing, from the geographical centre of Palestine, the western and eastern extremes of the old world, he will occupy earth's vantage places and will do his pleasure amongst men, according to his satanic ambitions and desires (13: 1–8). But his rule will not be for long. At the end of the seven years, wrath will be poured out upon the desolator (Dan. 9: 27; Rev. 19: 19, 20) and the under world will welcome him whom God will conquer and destroy (Isa. 14: 12–20). Also, his trinity of cities will be cast down, Rome and Babylon forever (17: 16, 17; 16: 17–21; 18: 21–23) and Jerusalem until that One who is its rightful King will build it up in righteousness, to be the praise and joy of the whole earth (Isa. 60: 1–22; 62: 1–12).

101

There are, spiritually speaking, two women in Scripture, the true and the false. The first of these was typified by the unfallen Eve (Gen. 2: 21–24), and the second by the fallen one (Gen. 3: 1–16); and the first finds its antitype in the church (Eph. 5: 22–31; Rev. 19: 7), and the second in the harlot of this seventeenth chapter (17: 1, 2). Also, as the fallen Eve represents a declension from truth (Gen. 3: 13; 2 Cor. 11: 3; 1 Tim. 2: 14), the harlot does

the same (17: 4). Thus it is that the Spirit presents to our view the harlot woman as holding in her hand one of the golden altar bowls (17: 4), which betokens her professed religiousness, and that He then reveals the fact that the bowl is full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication (17: 4), which betokens her wanton attractiveness and seducing power. In addition, the Spirit declares that this woman is the "mother of harlots" (17: 5), which indicates that her religious, carnal union with the Antichrist and the kings of the earth produces a brood of spiritual harlots like unto herself (17: 1, 2); and which indicates further, that her progeny is scattered beyond her own city and ecclesiastical confines into the far bounds of the earth and of apostate relationships, thus fulfilling the word that the "great harlot" sits upon many waters, that is, has her seat in the midst of many nations (17: 1, 15). And finally, the Spirit reveals the fact that this adulterous woman of apostasy makes alliance with the beast, that is, the Antichrist (17: 3) — who is full of names of blasphemy (17: 3) — and, having secured his political standing and power joins with him in persecuting the saints, who become the martyrs of Jesus, until she is actually drunken with their blood (17: 6), thus bringing to pass the great tribulation in its most intensive form. As related to this last, it is interesting to note that there have been two great persecutions of Christians in the past. The first of these was the ten-fold persecution of apostolic and post-apostolic times; and the second was the one which grew out of the Reformation. The former of these was one of a state against the church; and the latter was one of an apostate church against the true church. This seventeenth chapter reveals the fact that there is to be a third great persecution, and that this last will be one of a combined apostate church and state against the true church, the apostate

church supplying the characteristics of religious hatred and fanaticism, and the antichristian state those of governmental authority and power (17: 3–6, 12–14). Of the three, it is plain that the last will be the most comprehensive and terrible.

102

It is evident from the eighth and tenth verses of the seventeenth chapter that the Antichrist is to be a satanically miraculous personage (17: 8, 10). According to these verses, he will be one of seven kings, five of whom, in John's day, had passed away, one of whom was living and one of whom was yet to come. The Antichrist, being one of the first five of the seven and being then dead — it is possible that Alexander the Great is in mind (see Paragraph 37) — had gone into the abyss (17: 8, 11). At the same time, being yet to come, he would appear after the seven and would thus become an eighth (17: 11). Revealing and enlarging these statements, we may make the following declarations concerning this Man of Sin: first, he would be a king who had ruled on the earth; second, he had finished his earthly course when John was living; third, he was, when John wrote, shut up in the abyss; fourth, he would be reincarnated, that is, his spirit would be brought up from the under world, located in a human body, and given liberty to re-enter earthly existence and activity; fifth, he would, in this reincarnated state, be a king, would rule over a ten-fold kingdom, would be Satan's tool, and would fulfill his diabolical purposes in making war against the Lamb and His saints; and finally, he would be overcome by the Lamb and meet his doom by being sent, finally and forever, into perdition (17: 7–15; 2 Thess. 2: 1–12). It is to be noted from the above that the reincarnation of which the Buddhists and The-

osophists speak is not altogether apart from the truth. But according to Scripture, there is only one personage to whom such an experience is granted, namely, the Antichrist. In this single case, God permits the Devil, in the last days, to produce this supreme miracle. His doing so will bring upon the scene of life and history the greatest monster of iniquity, next to Satan, which the world has ever seen (2 Thess. 2: 3–11). Coming up from the abyss, he will do all the works of that nethermost region, becoming thus the full and exact antithesis of Him who came down from heaven and did the works of that uppermost place. He will thus be openly manifested, as Paul declared, as the Lie (2 Thess. 2: 11, R. V.). Happy the men, in those deceiving and beguiling days, who will be able both to discern and cleave to Him who is the Truth (John 1: 14, 17; 14: 6; 18: 37).

103

God has many ways in which He executes judgment. These may be classified into actions which are direct and indirect. Here in this seventeenth chapter it is indirect judgment. Verse three shows us that a great alliance is to be formed, in the last days, between the woman, that is, systematized apostasy, and the scarlet-colored beast, that is, the Antichrist (17: 3). Verse twelve reveals the fact that this alliance will be established throughout the European world by means of a political confederation which will be formed between the Antichrist and ten kings (17: 12). Verse fourteen makes it clear that the connecting tie between the Antichrist and the apostate systems, inclusive of Rome, will be a common hatred for Christ, as the atoning Lamb of God, and for the saints, as those who are called through Him, chosen by Him and faithful to

Him (17: 14). And verse sixteen presents the startling scene of a final break between the Antichrist and the woman, each having used the other to secure world-wide power, and the Man of Sin utilizing, at last, his political resources to rend and destroy his partner in spiritual corruption (17: 16). There can be little doubt of the fact that the occasion of this turning of the Antichrist against the harlot woman is to be found in his self-deification, where, having secured all he can from his consort in crime, he will brook no longer an equal companionship in reputation and glory, but will destroy her who has come to claim too much. It is evident that the Antichrist will do what he does with the single purpose of establishing himself in a world-wide authority and obtaining for himself universal worship (13: 1–18). But God is over all his actions, and, though he knows it not, he is but a pliant tool in the divine hands for the fulfillment of the providential purposes of judgment toward harlot Rome and all her allied systems. Thus indirectly through the Antichrist, but with terrible directness of result, the bolt of judgment finally falls and all the corrupt " Christian " systems of earth are brought to an end. What afterwards remains is the direct issue which will exist between a diabolical Antichrist and a divine Christ (17: 11–18).

104

The eighteenth chapter records the second judgment, that of commercial Babylon (18: 1–24). We are to understand that the description given is entirely literal, and that it thus refers to a city which is to be rebuilt on the site of ancient Babylon and is to bear its name. A careful reading of the prophecy which Isaiah uttered concerning Babylon (Isa. 13: 1–22) will reveal the fact that its reach

is far beyond the fall of the city which occurred in the past (cir. 300 B.C.). In the first place, certain prophesied events (Isa. 13: 20–22) have never yet been fulfilled, for there have been for long villages and their inhabitants upon and within the city's ruins, Arabians have pitched their tents there and shepherds have made their fold there; and in the second place, the whole prophecy is connected with the day of the Lord (Isaiah 13: 6, 9), which is the day of the Lord's vengeance upon the Antichrist and his followers, and hence, one which is yet to be; (see Paragraph 16). Isaiah's prophecies, therefore, have only had a first and minor fulfillment. This means that the second and major one lies somewhere in the future. But to make this last possible, Babylon must be rebuilt, for a city which does not exist cannot be destroyed. As to such a rebuilding, men may now more easily believe in its possibility than formerly. It is a well known fact that the German Kaiser fully planned to reëstablish Babylon, and, no doubt, he would soon have brought this to pass in case he had secured world dominion. Also, it is an open secret that Britain is deeply interested in the project of rebuilding the city, particularly in view of the fact that she has been granted the mandate over Palestine, for she sees the immense value such a place would have to her as a connecting, commercial link between the east and west. Moreover, Sir William Willcocks, by his engineering investigations, has shown to all the world that it is possible to reëstablish Babylon as a great international mart, for he has proved that the ancient canals, which once made Babylonia like the garden of the Lord, only need the touch of the engineer's rod and the workman's spade to turn them again into rivers of fertilization and fruitfulness. Thus from the combined standpoint of divine prophecy, national hope and scientific promise, we may conclude that Babylon

will be rebuilt. And there is every reason to believe, when this comes to pass, that the city, occupying a unique geographical and international position, will become the greatest metropolis which the world has ever seen.

105

Commercial greatness in cities does not often make for righteousness. Indeed, history indicates that its trend is usually in the opposite direction. And, this being true, it is generally the case that the greater the city the greater the unrighteousness. It is happily a fact that there is frequently to be found, in the midst of godless cities, a very godly company of saints. But such a company, under these conditions, is not much better than a flock of kids amongst wolves. Now, all these characteristics are found in this eighteenth chapter, as connected with future Babylon. It is a city which is great beyond compare, except as the Holy City will exceed it (18: 9–19). It is one which, along with increase of wealth, has multiplied iniquities beyond any city earth has known (18: 1–3, 5). It is one which has defied and plagued the saints of the Most High, in excess of any metropolis which has ever existed (18: 20, 24). It is one whose sinfulness and persecution are so great that the saints are called forth from it as the only hope of their finding spiritual separateness and physical preservation (18: 4). And it is one which finally meets with God's double of punishment, being utterly and forever overwhelmed (18: 6–8). It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10: 31); and Antichrist and his followers, as here recorded, are beginning to find this out. Not that this leads any of this company to repent of their misdeeds. They are reprobates beyond recovery, and judgment only confirms them

in their rebellion against heaven. They are, therefore, foredoomed. And here, through this chapter of devastation, we see the beginnings of divine judgment falling upon them in the destruction of this notable city of Babylon. Its political power and commercial wealth have been, evidently, the foundation upon which Antichrist and his followers have built their babel tower toward heaven (18: 5), and its overthrow moves these impious ones mightily (18: 9, 10, 19). But by so much as earth mourns over Babylon's downfall, heaven rejoices over it (18: 20). It is notable that the only Alleluias recorded in the Revelation, are occasioned by the destruction of this greatest and wickedest of earth's dwelling places (19: 1–4).

106

One of the most perplexing mysteries of life is found in the fact that sometimes earth's best things are found to be its worst. And this mystery is made even more perplexing by the added fact that often these best things are discovered to be the gifts of God to man and meant by Him to be for his temporal and eternal good. Take, for instance, the list of objects mentioned in the twelfth and thirteenth verses of this eighteenth chapter: gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet, all thyine wood, vessels of ivory, vessels of most precious wood, brass, iron, marble, cinnamon, odors, ointments, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, beasts, sheep, horses and chariots (18: 12, 13). All of these are good and perfect gifts, and may be regarded as having come from above, from the Father of lights (Jas. 1: 17). This is seen to be the case when one remembers the fact that nearly everything mentioned in the long list given was, in the old time, connected and identified by God with

the tabernacle and temple. And yet here, these beautiful and sacred things are found in Babylon, are the signs of men's spiritual defilement and are the objects of God's wrath and destruction. This is hard to be understood. But we get a glimpse of the inner meaning of things when we note and add to the list above quoted a few words there omitted, namely, "slaves, and souls of men" (18: 13). These words suggest, not only lawful trafficking in the goodly gifts of God but also unlawful trafficking in the same; and it is this unlawful practicing on the part of Antichrist and his fellows which will turn Babylon and its crafts from the legitimate into the illegitimate, from the tolerable into the intolerable. This is an old story, for history is full of it. Men have unceasingly laid hold upon the fairest gifts of grace and turned them into the foulest. And they have generally done this for sake of gain. The cry of man, down the ages, has been, "Money; we must have money!" and in the process of getting money they have sold their souls and those of their fellows. It appears then, that the gifts of God are good or bad according to the use which men make of them. Let the man be bad as he uses a gift of God and immediately the gift becomes like the man. In this instance, Antichrist takes priceless treasures, including lives and souls, and uses them ruthlessly for commercial gain; and, like a lightning flash from heaven, God's pronouncement against him and his great city goes forth.

107

The successive series of punishments meted out to sinful men, from the trumpet period to the judgment, indicates that God is not the weakling that He is, in these modern times, supposed and represented to be. It is admitted

that God in the Old Testament economy was a God of judgment. But it is held that Christ introduced something new into the divine order by the revelation of His gentleness and mercy, and that He so much altered the ways, if not the very character of God, that never again may consuming fires of judgment fall from heaven upon them. The reading of the Revelation corrects conclusions of this sort. Here is the vision, not only of God, but also of Christ sitting upon heaven's throne and pouring out wrath, seal upon seal, trumpet upon trumpet, thunder upon thunder, vial upon vial and judgment upon judgment, until the heaven is black and the earth is shaken, and men are crying out in awful fear. The truth of the matter is, men have persisted, in spite of revelation and experience, in fashioning for themselves a god of their own and calling it "God" and "Christ," whereas their product is no more like the Jehovah of Scripture than earth is like heaven. The God of the New Testament as well as of the Old is indeed a God of grace. But He is also a Man of war. That is a remarkable word of Paul where he says at Athens, "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the *man* whom he hath ordained" (Acts 17: 31); and that is a most remarkable vision in the Revelation where Christ, who is called Faithful and True, is seen coming as a white horse warrior and is declared to be the One who in righteousness "doth judge and make war" (19: 11). It is quite true of Christ that a "bruised reed shall he not break and smoking flax shall he not quench." But this is only the case "*till* he send forth judgment unto victory" (Isa. 42: 3; Matt. 12: 20). In other words, there is a time of grace and another of judgment, and the one follows the other as surely as the night follows the day. The day of grace has long been extended, wherein it has been grace upon grace. But the night of

judgment, according to the Revelation, will soon fall upon the earth, wherein it will be judgment upon judgment. And the darkest aspect of it all is, not the wrath of God and the fear of men, terrible as these are, but rather, that neither wrath nor fear leads men to repentance but only to further hardness of heart and increased enmity against God (6: 12–17; 9: 20, 21; 11: 8–11; 16: 8–11, 20, 21). God is long-suffering. Nevertheless, if men insist upon withdrawing themselves from His mercy, the Lord will come as a thief, to judge and destroy (2 Pet. 3: 9, 10). "Behold then the *goodness* and *severity* of God" (Rom. 11: 22).

108

That the church is on earth through the days of the Antichrist, that is, until the time in view at the beginning of the nineteenth chapter, seems to be made certain as a result of considering the following lines of proof to this effect: First, Christians are evidently present in the Laodicean period (3: 14–22) — the apostate conditions of which may only be found in the time of the great apostasy — which is the time of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2: 1–4). Second, there is no hint of the resurrection and translation of the church where such are usually said to take place, namely, in the fourth chapter of the Revelation. Third, the record states that companies of believers are in the midst of earth's events up to the time of the destruction of the city of Babylon (18: 1–24), the distinctly Christian phraseology used forbidding the thought that these are only orthodox Jews or are Jews who are post-advent believers but not a part of the body of Christ, and confirming the thought that they are true members of the church, since those who live, "hold the testimony of Jesus" and those who die, "die in the Lord" (7: 3; 8: 3,

4; 12: 17; 13: 7–10; 14: 4, 12, 13; 16: 15; 17: 6; 18: 4, 24). Fourth, the verse in the book which mentions the completion of the church, when the resurrection and translation must necessarily occur, combines with it the express statement that this takes place when the seventh trumpet begins to sound (10: 7), which carries forward the events of resurrection and translation into the days of the Antichrist and brings them to a time just before the close of his career (11: 7, 15). Fifth, the passage which first describes the resurrection and translation is found in the introduction (see the Analysis) of the vial and judgment periods (14: 1–5, 14–16), which leads to the conclusion that it points forward to the judgment of the saints, this event being portrayed in the nineteenth chapter (19: 1–10) and located after the days of the Antichrist and just previous to his judgment (19: 19, 20). Sixth and lastly, it is clear that the church is the only body which has part in the first resurrection and which shares with Christ His millennial reign (20: 1–6), and yet the passage which proves this fact positively states that a part of that body is made up of those who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, nor in their hands (20: 4). It follows, therefore, that Christians remain on earth through the days of the Antichrist, witness against him, and are persecuted by him. All this being the case, the whole company of believers — since the church is not divided at the time of the resurrection and translation — is caught up to meet the Lord after the events in the days of the Antichrist above described have taken place (Dan. 12: 1–3; Matt. 24: 15–30; Rev. 14: 9–16).

109

The thought is often expressed and still more often felt that God loves His saints too well to allow them to stand face to face with the Antichrist and to pass through the great tribulation. If Scripture and experience teach this, all controversy, of course, is immediately ended. But do they? Did God love Christ too well to forbid His standing before His antichrist and passing through His great tribulation? Or, if it is said — as it may most justly be said — that Christ was unique in His experiences, did God love Peter, James, John and Paul too well for this; or the apostolic church; or the church of the Reformation; or the more modern Christians of Armenia, Madagascar, and China? It is a historical fact that the church, from apostolic days to the present, has always faced antichrists (1 John 2: 18, 22; 4: 3; 2 John 7) and has frequently passed through periods of tribulation (2: 10, 13; 3: 10); and the Scripture makes it plain that this will be her appointed portion to the end of her earthly pilgrimage (Acts 14: 22; Rom. 8: 35; 1 Thess. 3: 4). There is no occasion then, for surprise on the part of the church when an antichrist arises and persecution comes. As a matter of fact, there is more need for surprise when there are no antichrists and persecutions. Indeed, this latter is so true, that Christians may well question, in times of universal quiet and peace, if things are with them spiritually just what they ought to be. For suffering, not comfort, is the appointed lot of God's heritage, even as Paul said: "For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we were accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Rom. 8: 36); and again, "We must through much tribulation (or, many tribulations, R. V.) enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14: 22). The fact of the matter is, the dealing of God with His

saints and especially their dealing with Him, during about a hundred years past, have brought His people to some seriously false conclusions concerning suffering. On God's side, there has been granted to the modern church a breathing space in order that there might be ample and unhindered opportunity to pass through divinely opened doors. But on the side of the saints, the vast majority of these have gladly accepted the breathing space thus given, and then have refused to pass through the opened doors. In time, therefore, these saints have come to conclude that the prosperity of quiet and easement from suffering is not only their lot, but also their right. What a shock it was in 1900, therefore, when the Boxer movement broke over their cherished kith and kin like a devastating storm! In those days of sorrow, many a soul secretly demanded to know of God what He was doing. His only answer was, the allowance of further torture and death — till the storm had passed. And yet since then He has given another and even more dreadful answer to questioning souls, as France, Germany, Turkey and Armenia bear witness. It is significant, in the letter to the Philadelphian church, that He who says, He openeth and no man shutteth, also says, He shutteth and no man openeth, and that this same One immediately adds that there is an hour of trial which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth (3: 7–10). It is evident that the Hand that bears the key of David and which turned for a time the usual of suffering into the unusual of peace, will in coming days turn the unusual of peace into the usual of suffering; for accumulating evidence indicates that the church which had torment in the old days but has sat at ease in the new, will be called upon to re-enter blood-stained paths and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. It may not be regarded as exegesis but it may be reckoned

as analogy, that Christ thrice asked Peter, who was appointed unto suffering and death, if he loved Him, and that, so far, He has asked Christians at large this same question but twice, once in apostolic days and once in Reformation, which suggests that the third time is yet to be. And as Peter confessed his Lord three times over and confirmed, finally, his words by willing death, so the church has said twice and will say thrice, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee!" and they too will willingly seal their covenant-troth by poured-forth blood.

110

The frightfulness of the persecution of the Antichrist, according to the Revelation, will be manifested not so much in its supreme intensity as in its supreme extensity. Happily, there is a limitation in human nature as related to suffering, the point being speedily reached where the mortal frame can bear no more; and modern Armenia — not to speak of other martyr nations — probably saw in the individual life as much physical pain and spiritual anguish as will ever be seen in the days of the Man of Sin. But there is, nevertheless, an essential difference between the days which are past and those which are to come. The Antichrist will be a European ruler (17: 3, 7, 11–13) and also, a world ruler (13: 1–8), and what the cruel venom of some Attila or Sultan has been in a small area will be his in a much larger one. This is the evident and sure prospect which is before the peoples of the earth. One came in the Father's name, and men would not receive Him; another will come in his own name, and him they will receive (John 5: 42, 43). One came as a Man of Peace to bring peace on the earth (Isa. 9: 6; Luke 2: 13, 14) and Him they rejected and crucified (Matt. 27:

22; Acts 2: 22, 23); another will come as a man of war to bring war, and him they will crown and deify (6: 3–8; 13: 1–8). And so the divine edict will, at last, go forth: "If any man is for captivity, into captivity he goeth; if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed" (13: 10). In short, the ancient truth of God which Job expressed has place here as elsewhere; "If I have spread my couch in the darkness; if I have said to corruption, Thou art my father — where then is my hope" (Job 17: 13–15)? What a man is he chooses and what he chooses he obtains. Nor is there a law in heaven or earth which may ever make it otherwise. Man is indeed the arbiter of his own destiny, for God will never force a soul to make any other choice than that which it is pleased to make. So it is then, that men finally and fully secure the things which have been their heart's desire. They have chosen self-will and they get it personified in the Man of Sin (13: 5, 6); they have chosen the lusts of the flesh and they get these in the false liberty and foul license which the Antichrist grants (18: 1–4, 15–19); they have chosen wealth and all the sin and sinning which go with it, and this they obtain under the Antichrist's rule and patronage (13: 16–18; 18: 1–5); they have chosen ways of greed and war instead of unselfishness and peace and these become theirs in full measure under the lead of the red horse warrior (6: 3–8). But, at last, they have to pay the price for all these things, in full measure and down to the last detail (18: 5–21). In these seven years of the Antichrist, the nations are made to drink of the cup of their iniquity till they reel and stagger as drunkards do. It was a fair morning which broke over the world there at Pentecost, when, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, all of the benefits of Christ's death were offered to a needy world. But here in these last of the last days, the

sun sinks down blood-red and the world is suddenly plunged into the gloom of a fearful night. The age began in the peace and promise of grace; it will end with the cataclysmic shock of a world-wide judgment.

111

The nineteenth chapter begins with a great Alleluia! on the part of the saints in heaven, in view of the triumph which Christ has secured over Babylon, spiritual and commercial (19: 1–4). These holy ones in the heavenlies see, from their high vantage place, that the way has thus been prepared for further judgments, and that this will lead to Christ's final victory and enthronement. They also perceive that all of the judgments which have taken place, especially those of the two Babylons, have vindicated the persecuted and martyred servants of God, and that the time is at hand when these will share in the triumph and exaltation of Christ (19: 2, 3). As the song of praise voiced by these adoring hosts of heaven ascends, the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fall down and worship Him that sits upon the throne, saying "Amen, Alleluia" (19: 4). And, as this combined chorus of rejoicing and praise is heard through the heavenly courts, a voice comes out of the throne which calls for even further adoration of God. At this, there is a fresh outburst of praise, "the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (19: 6). The heavenly hosts, according to these last words, foresee the time of Christ's conquest over all His followers; and — turning a future tense into a present one — they anticipate by faith what Christ is about to accomplish. All of this is most significant. That

the saints in heaven regard devastating judgments with such calm and make them the cause and basis of such praise, is almost beyond our understanding. Yet the fact of this is here set before us. We are thus instructed that God is as clearly revealed in the thick darkness as He is in the clear light; for it becomes manifest here that His ways of judgment are as truly the occasion of heart satisfaction to the heavenly denizens as are those of mercy and peace. Earth, generally, does not afford us just views of God. To obtain such, we need to stand in heavenly places and look at things from a heavenly standpoint.

112

Verse seven of chapter nineteen brings us to the event toward which every revealed episode in the Revelation has been moving, namely, the second advent of Christ (19: 7–9). Indeed, this is the climax for which God and all His new-born creatures have waited since sin made a Redeemer and King necessary. Tennyson spoke more truly than he knew when he sang of, "One far-off, divine event, to which the whole creation moves," for the conflicting course of life, its joys and sorrows, its gains and losses, its hopes and disappointments have all prefigured the coming of One who should be God's Vicegerent on earth and who should reign gloriously. But, above all, it is the moment for which the bride has waited, she having been a stranger and pilgrim upon the earth (1 Pet. 2: 11), having walked through trying and dangerous places, and having had to watch, through many a long night-vigil, for Him who having not seen she has loved, in whom, though she has seen Him not, yet she has believed (1 Pet. 1: 8). At last, then, the days of her waiting are over, for as the record says, "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his

wife hath made herself ready" (19: 7). Thereupon, there follows the judgment of the saints. This, no doubt, takes place in heavenly places, at the first instant of meeting between Christ and His own (19: 8, 9). At once, each saint is given his true place before God; and, from this time on, the redeemed, in resurrection bodies, are forever with the Lord (1 Thess. 4: 13–17; 1 Cor. 15: 51–57). This priceless privilege will bring to the saints their highest bliss and their chiefest recompense (John 14: 3). As to the return of Christ, the following facts have been derived from our studies and may be held as true. The second advent of our Lord is personal (1: 7; 2: 5, 25; 3: 11); it is literal (1: 7); it is for the rewarding of the faithful saints (2: 16, 17, 25, 26; 3: 11, 12); it is for the judgment of the unfaithful saints (2: 5, 16; 3: 3, 11); and it is for the judgment and punishment of the wicked (19: 11–21).

113

The judgment of Christians revealed in the nineteenth chapter and which takes place at the coming of Christ for His saints, is the third one in order (19: 6–9; see the Analysis). It is not in respect of sin, but service and rewards (1 Cor. 4: 1–5). Sin for the redeemed was judged once and forever at Calvary's cross, in and upon the person of Christ (John 19: 30; Rom. 5: 1; 2 Cor. 5: 21; Heb. 7: 26; 9: 24–28; 1 Pet. 3: 18). Incidentally, this truth reveals the heinousness of the sin of the Roman and Greek Catholic mass, not only because it is flagrant idolatry, but also and particularly because it professes to reincarnate Christ, repeat His sacrifice and add to what He perfectly accomplished, which leads to the ensnarement and condemnation of multitudes of souls and also impugns the work, the word and the very character of God (Heb. 2: 14–18; 3: 12–15; 4: 14–16;

5: 5–10; 7: 11–17, 26–28; 8: 8–13; 9: 11–15, 23–28; 10: 10, 18). But believers who understand God's truth, know that sin has forever been put away and that they are saved to the uttermost (Luke 19: 10; John 6: 47; 10: 27–30; Rom. 8: 1; 1 John 2: 1; 3: 1, 2; 4: 15–17). Nevertheless, Christians will be judged, the Word making this entirely plain (Rom. 14: 10; 2 Cor. 5: 10). This judgment is in regard to the Christian's service, and the purpose of it is the divine determination of his rewarding. Even in the extreme scriptural case of the one whose works are entirely burned, the man himself is saved (1 Cor. 3: 10–15). Another Scripture, however, makes it clear that each will have done something for Christ for which he will receive His praise (1 Cor. 4: 5). At such a time, the great question of Christian fidelity is entered into and determined upon (1 Cor. 3: 8, 14; 4: 1–5; Rev. 11: 18; 22: 12). It is true that there is the possibility, at this time, of the saint's being ashamed before Christ at His coming (1 John 2: 28). But it is also true that there is the possibility of his being gloriously and eternally recompensed (Luke 14: 14; Phil. 4: 1; 1 Thess. 2: 19, 20; 2 Tim. 4: 8; Rev. 2: 7, 10, 17, 25–27; 3: 5, 12, 21). The Holy Spirit, therefore, warns the servants of Christ against indifference lest they should lose their crown (3: 11) and He urges them to watchfulness, so that they may run and win the prize (1 Cor. 9: 24–27; Heb. 12: 1, 2). It is here then, in this nineteenth chapter, that Christ gathers His people to Himself (19: 1) and that the betrothed bride is made the wife and thus prepared for heavenly and age-lasting fellowship with the Lamb (19: 6, 7). Here, at last, she is seen in garments not spotted by the flesh, but bright and pure (19: 8), and here it is that she sits down at the bridal feast, the marriage supper of the Lamb (19: 7, 9). All these things being so, it is no surprise that the record tells us that heaven suddenly reverberates with praiseful song.

Now for the first time and before the throne of God, there is heard the true and full Hallelujah Chorus (19: 1–8).

114

The judgment of the Antichrist and the false prophet constitute, in the series of judgments, the fourth one (see the Analysis). This is described in the nineteenth chapter (19: 11–21). It reveals Christ coming as a great white horse warrior, bearing the name of "Faithful and True," and judging and making war "in righteousness" (19: 11). His eyes flash as a flame of fire (19: 12); on His head are many crowns (19: 11); He bears a secret name known only to Himself (19: 12); He is clothed with a vesture dipped in His enemies' blood (19: 13; Isa. 63: 1–6) and His name is called, "The Word of God" (19: 13). That this is the coming of Christ with His saints is made plain by the fact that this white horse warrior is followed by the armies of heaven, themselves seated upon white horses, and all of them clothed in fine linen, white and clean (19: 14). That the Christ comes in judgment against His enemies is revealed by the fact that it is declared that out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, which is used in smiting the nations; and by the further fact that He is to rule these nations with a rod of iron (19: 15). All of this is preliminary to His judging the nations. But before He does this last, He takes issue with His arch-enemy, the Antichrist, and also the false prophet, these two being the cause of the sin and destruction which fall, in the last days, upon mankind. Both of these monsters of iniquity are taken and cast alive into the lake of fire, which burns with brimstone (19: 20). These are the first two personages who are committed to that place of torment; and it is evident that they are placed there for eternity, for they are seen there a thousand years

after (20: 10), and the Spirit declares that the Antichrist is the " son of perdition " (2 Thess. 2: 3) and goes into perdition (17: 8, 11), which phrases indicate his unchangeable character and unalterable destiny. Antichrist is the last great head of the human race and, as such, he is the greatest enemy of Christ which the race has produced. It is for this reason that he is dealt with in advance and so drastically. His strange and tragic reception in the underworld is revealed by Isaiah, that world being greatly moved to meet him at his coming (Isa. 14: 9–11).

115

The judgment of the nations, following that of the saints, is the fifth judgment: (see the Analysis). It differs, apparently, from all other judgments in that it covers a prolonged period of time. It begins with the coming of Christ with His saints (19: 11–21); but it is continued through the whole of His millennial reign and its climax is reached in the " little time " at the end of the thousand years (20: 1–3, 7–9). The judgment is divided, therefore, into three times and kinds; first, immediately before the millennium, when it is specially related to the course of the nations in the period of the Antichrist and to their treatment of the Jewish Christians of that time (Joel 3: 1–17; Zech. 14: 1–5; Matt. 25: 31–46); second, during the millennium, when the uppermost question is the relationship of the nations to the divine law (Isa. 2: 1–4; 42: 1–9; 65: 17–20; Mic. 4: 1–5); and third, immediately after the millennium, when the subject at issue will be the attitude of the nations toward Satan and the revolt which he successfully fosters and impiously leads (20: 7–9). It is clear from the Scripture, as it may also be concluded in the nature of the case, that God in all these conflicts and judgments comes off supremely and

eternally a victor, the nations finding out in each time and circumstance that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10: 30, 31). As a deduction from the above, it becomes plain that the millennial reign of Christ is not simply one of beneficent grace and peace. It is this, for His spirit will be poured out in that day upon all flesh and men will not need to say, "Know ye the Lord, for all shall know him from the least unto the greatest" (Isa. 61: 1–11; Jer. 31: 31–34; Hos. 14: 4–8; Zech. 9: 9, 10; 12: 10–14; 13: 1). But in addition to this, it will be the period in earth's experience when law, as such, will be perfectly proclaimed and administered, so that justice may always be secured and penalty will always be executed (Ps. 72: 1–19; Isa. 11: 1–10; 12: 1–5). The peace which will be enjoyed, therefore, will result from two causes; first, in connection with the righteous, as a result of law-keeping; and second, in connection with the unrighteous, as a result of law-execution. In this last respect, Christ and His people will rule with a rod of iron and sinners will be dealt with according to their deserts and immediately following any transgression (Ps. 2: 1–12; Isa. 11: 1–5; 1 Cor. 6: 1; Rev. 2: 26, 27; 12: 5). Thus, for the first time in the world's history, "a King shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment" (Isa. 32: 1, 2). But in spite of a visible Christ and a perfectly adjudicated law, no sooner is Satan loosed from his prison than men rebel against the law and the Law-giver and administrator. Then, finally, will be manifested the fact, by the sad token of climacteric proof and tragic demonstration, that man is incorrigible in sin and that none is good, save one, even God (Luke 18: 19).

116

There is a difference of opinion among students of the Word in respect to the time of Christ's return, that is, as to whether He will come before or after the millennium. There is little difference between such in regard to the major details of the advent; as to the fact of a return, as to its being personal and as to there being a millennium of some kind. The difference is in reference to process and result, namely, as to whether the present age will head up into a general state of iniquity, calling for the coming of Christ in judgment, this being followed by His millennial reign; or as to whether the world will gradually develop into a state of conversion, the millennium being thus produced, and this being followed by the coming of Christ. It is to be noted, in passing, that a decision between these two views is not to be reached, as is sometimes done, by saying that the advent must be premillennial since the saints could not look for Christ's coming if it could not occur until the thousand years are over. This is the fact for two reasons: first, because many post-millennial Christians, in effect, do look for the second coming, ardently longing to see and be with the Lord, thus indicating that the test of watchfulness is not a certain scriptural conception, but rather a heart and life attitude; and second, because Peter makes it plain that saints may look for an event which is far away, though many prophesied incidents may stand before it, the one being looked for through the others (2 Pet. 3: 1–13). The question, then, is to be settled by a more careful and larger study of the prophetic scriptures. And many persons of sane temperament, large scholarship and ripe spirituality have given such attention to the prophetic Word and have reached the conclusion that the second advent is premillennial. The following scriptural evidences have brought

them to this conclusion. First, Jesus, in the days of His flesh, asked the question whether when He came He would find faith on the earth, and evidently intimated by so doing, that He knew, comparatively speaking, that He would not (Luke 18: 8). Second, Jesus, while He was on earth, portrayed the condition of the world at the time of His return and compared it to that which existed in the days of Noah and Lot, and it is to be remembered that at that time the state of mankind was one of general indifference and sinfulness (Matt. 24: 37–39; Luke 17: 26–30). Third, Christ made it plain in His various parables addressed to the Jews — Peter and Paul afterwards confirming the thought — that many Jews and Gentiles, at the moment of His arriving, would be, not His friends but His enemies, and this to such an extent that He would be obliged to deal with them in bitter judgment (Luke 19: 12–27; 1 Cor. 15: 24, 25; Heb. 10: 12, 13). Fourth, the Holy Spirit in several passages presents a scene, at the time of Christ's arrival, not of joy, as would be the case if the world were converted, but rather of woe and lamentation (1: 7; Zech. 12: 10–14; Matt. 24: 30). Fifth, Paul and Peter give long and detailed descriptions of the conditions of the world in the last days and these are altogether contrary to the thought of a state of general conversion at the end of the age (1 Tim. 4: 1–3; 2 Tim. 3: 1–5; 2 Pet. 2: 1–3; 3: 1–7). Sixth, the Scripture sets forth the fact in many passages that one of the purposes which Christ has in coming back to earth is that of dealing with the nations at large because of national transgressions, which indicates that there is at the time of His appearing a widespread and almost universal departure from Him and His law (6: 12–17; 9: 20, 21; 11: 17–19; 19: 11–21; Isa. 13: 6–11; Ezek. 30: 1–19; Joel 3: 9–16; Matt. 25: 31–46; 1 Thess. 5: 1–3; 2 Thess. 1: 3–9). Seventh, Paul specifically states that there is a mystery of iniquity already

working, that this will go on developing until it heads up in the Antichrist, that subsequently there will be a general adherence to that person and that it will be against him and his followers that Christ will come (2 Thess. 1: 1–12). Eighth, John confirms the thought of Paul by connecting the appearing of Christ with descriptions of a destroying judgment upon Antichrist and his adherents (14: 9–11; 19: 11–21). Ninth, Christ prophesied in respect to this present age, in spite of His provision and longing for the salvation of men, that, comparatively speaking, only the few will be saved and the many will be lost (Matt. 7: 13, 14, 21–23; 24: 5, 12; Luke 12: 32; Acts 15: 14; Rom. 7: 5–7; 11: 5; 1 Cor. 1: 26–29; 1 Pet. 4: 17, 18). Tenth, the Holy Spirit makes the order of events unmistakably plain in two passages of Scripture: first, in that one where James at Jerusalem declares that first God would gather out a people for His name, that after this Christ would return, and that then would occur the millennial restoration of Israel and the salvation of the Gentiles (Acts 15: 13–18); and second, in that one where John describes the coming of Christ and portrays in consequence of this event His millennial reign (19: 11–21; 20: 1–6). Eleventh and lastly, it is manifest that the millennial conditions, even though the Gospel has been freely and widely preached for nearly two thousand years, are not, as yet, in any sense fulfilled; for Christ is in heaven upon the throne of His Father (3: 21; Heb. 8: 1; 12: 2) instead of on earth upon the throne of David (Matt. 25: 31, 32; Luke 1: 31–33); Christians are not sitting upon thrones and are not ruling over Jews and Gentiles (2: 26, 27; 3: 31; 20: 4; Rom. 8: 16, 17; Matt. 19: 28; Luke 22: 29, 30); the Jews have not been restored to their land and are not worshipping and serving God (Isa. 11: 1–9; 12: 1–6; 14: 1–3; 35: 1–10; 40: 9–11; 52: 1–15; 60: 1–22; Zech. 10: 1–12; 13: 1–9; 14: 1–11); the world, though many

men are crying "Peace," is still engaged in deadly wars (1 Thess. 5: 1–3; Isa. 2: 1–4; Hos. 2: 18); and finally, it is not as yet the case in any part of the world — in any continent, country, city, town, village or hamlet — that Satan is bound and his satanic temptings and conquests are at an end (20: 1–3). For all these reasons, it seems reasonable to conclude, while it is evident that God is doing an effective and large work in gathering out a people for His name, that the development of the world is increasingly toward a lawlessness and anarchy which will one day call for divine interposition and retribution. In short, it appears certain that this age will end, as previous ages have done, in rebellion against God, and hence, with cataclysmic judgments, and that only after this will come upon this earth the beneficent, millennial reign of Christ.

117

It should occasion no surprise that so few details are given in chapter twenty concerning the millennial reign of the Lord. One would naturally look for these here, since that reign is spoken of as being for the long period of a thousand years (20: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). But consideration of the subject will remind us of the fact that there was no divine need of a detailed description being given in this place, the same having been presented in many passages in the Old Testament (Gen. 49: 8–12; Num. 23: 7–10, 18–24; 24: 3–9, 15–19; Ps. 2: 2–12; 46: 1–11; 67: 1–7; 72: 1–19; Isa. 11: 1–16; 12: 1–6; 32: 1–20; 35: 1–10; 42: 1–16; 52: 1–15; 60: 1–22; 61: 1–11; 62: 1–12; 63: 1–6; Jer. 23: 1–8; 31: 31–40; 33: 1–26; Ezek. 37: 1–28; 47: 1–12; Dan. 2: 44, 45; Zech. 14: 1–11, 20, 21; Mal. 3: 1–12; 4: 5, 6). It cannot be kept in mind too fully, and, therefore, cannot be said too often, that, generally, God does not repeat what He has

once revealed, for the simple reason that He deems one revelation, since it is absolute and infinite truth, to be sufficient. He may speak of the same subject again and again. But a study of the passages so given will disclose the fact that each added revelation is not a repetition but a new and larger one, it being an amplification of what has been previously given. So it is with this twentieth chapter. A comprehensive description of the millennium had been presented in the Old Testament, and what had been stated did not need to be repeated. However, there were several important items which had not been previously mentioned. One was that there should be both a first and second resurrection (20: 5, 6). Another was, that Christians, exclusively, would be granted a place in the first resurrection (20: 6). Another was that these Christians, whether saved before or during the tribulation, would sit on thrones and reign with Christ during the whole millennial period (20: 4). And another was that Christ would reign on and over the earth for exactly one thousand years (20: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). It is important to note this last item, in the connection given. For many interpreters, whose reverent loyalty to the Word may not be doubted, have affirmed that the thousand year rule of Christ and His saints is not to be believed in since "it is only once mentioned in Scripture." But it will be seen that the statement made, whatever the spirit of the interpreter, is not a correct one. For first, the millennium is mentioned frequently in the Scripture, it being described in many Old Testament passages, and also, it being specified in this New Testament one, not once, but as many as six times over, a fact, in other scriptural connections, which is unprecedented in the whole course of Holy Writ; and second, it would be, even if it were true, without point as an argument, for, as said, it is often the case that important prophetic items are only

once mentioned, and a single affirmation in the divinely inspired writings is as full of force and as worthy of credence as if it were stated a thousand times. Moreover, it is to be kept in mind that the Word is a unit, and that this twentieth chapter is a part of a great whole. Its testimony, then, is to be considered in connection with what is elsewhere written, and to be interpreted by and with all that is otherwise given.

118

The twentieth chapter brings us into the realm of God's earthly politics. For we see here Christ as His vicegerent, the nineteenth chapter designating Him, "King of kings and Lord of lords" (19: 16), and this one definitely stating that He will reign on earth for a thousand years, His saints being co-regnant with Him (20: 4, 6). To some minds this seems to reduce both Christ and the saints to a low-level order of things, bringing them down from the heights of heaven to the depths of earth and from the refinement of the spiritual to the sordidness of the physical. But it is to be remembered, before one reaches this conclusion, that it is not a case of what we might naturally imagine would be true, but rather and only what we discover God has supernaturally revealed. And in respect to the latter, there can hardly be more than one opinion. Again and again in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit prophesied that the Messiah would come to earth as a King and reign in person over the Jews and Gentiles, and always in such language as forbids spiritualizing away the details given, or conceiving of them as having been fulfilled or as being in the process of fulfillment in the history of the church (Ps. 46: 1–7, R. V.; 72: 1–19; Isa. 11: 1–16; 12: 1–6; 35: 1–10). Again, the angel who announced to the Virgin Mary the conception within her, by the Holy Ghost, of Jesus, the Christ,

specifically stated that He would inherit and occupy the throne of His father, David, which, be it remembered, was not in heaven but on earth, and at Jerusalem, this meaning that the messianic reign will be here below, with its center at the city of the great King (Luke 1: 30–35). Again, the fact that Christ has been on earth does away with all difficulty with His being here a second time, especially as He was here, subsequent to His resurrection, in the same body as He will have when He reappears (Acts 1: 11). Again, past and present political experience calls loudly for the coming and reign of Christ, for, up to the present, human government, whether it has been that of a monarchial or republican kind, has been a lamentable failure so far as divine ideals are concerned, kings and presidents not having succeeded, in spite of notable strivings, in obtaining divine righteousness or in dispensing exact and full justice. And again, both human amends and divine requital demand that Christ shall be greatly honored where once He was greatly dishonored, He having come to His own and His own having received Him not (John 1: 11), and having come as a King and having been crucified as a slave (John 1: 10; 19: 8–16). For all these reasons, it is not strange but rather most reasonable that God, before the end of earthly experience, should interpose in governmental affairs and demonstrate to men, not what government " of the people, by the people and for the people " should be, but rather and better, what government by God, through Christ and in behalf of men is and ever may be. For the millennium will be the presentation, from the standpoint of rulership, of God's ideals of law and justice; and Christ, according to the Scriptures, will be set upon His holy hill of Zion to be the formulator of the one and the administrator of the other (Ps. 2: 6; 72: 1–19).

119

Those who have read history broadly are conversant with the fact that not all rulers have been bad, and indeed, that some have been very good. England can proudly point to some of her kings and queens as persons of high minds and altruistic thoughts; and America can thankfully remember not a few presidents who have sought to fulfill the responsibility of their high office both in the wisdom and fear of God. But those who have read history, not only broadly but also perceptively, have discerned the added fact that no such kings or presidents, in spite of intention and effort, have attained to their ideals. Even the best rulers, not to speak of men of lower and lesser breed, have failed to reach the heights which they visualized and strove after. And the reason is not far to seek. They found their first hindrance to attainment in themselves, and their second, in mankind. As for themselves, they discovered that it is one thing to have visions and another to turn them into realities; and as to others, they finally realized that it is impossible to bring regenerate acts out of unregenerate spirits. As a result of this, many good rulers in solitude, have eaten out their hearts in the face of their unfulfilled longings; or — which is one of earth's saddest spectacles — they have finally compromised with truth, have become content to seek for a good which was not the best, and have found, with sorrow, that the "middle path of practical affairs" leads downward and not upward, away from God and not toward Him, and thus, is to the despoiling and dishonoring of the soul. History at its best, therefore, is sad reading, it being one long story of disappointed hopes and blasted ideals. It presents altruistic progress in thought and action of a real and abounding kind; and for this one may and must be devoutly thankful. But it is almost if not alto-

gether a platitude to say that God's standards of law and action, governmentally speaking, are not yet even in sight, not to speak of their being reached. If one wishes to demonstrate this, let him read God's ten commandments and Christ's sermon on the mount, and then the first page of the average English or American newspaper. It is a patent fact, everywhere, that man is endeavoring to rule himself apart from God. Thus, while he is advancing humanly, he is not doing so divinely. What, therefore, is needed and must be obtained, if heights are to be reached and ideals are to be realized, is a human subjectivity toward God and a divine enabling toward men. It is just here that God, one day, will see both man's great need and His own opportunity, and thus, will bring to pass what rulers have failed to secure. For, in a time to come, He will do two new and notable things; He will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh in preparation for His rulership (Joel 2: 28–32; Zech. 12: 10–14); and also, He will send His beloved Son in order that He may crush out the wrong and lift up and enthrone the right (Ps. 72: 1–4, 12–17). And the Christ who will do this will have, inherently, the divine prerogative and power to bring these great results to pass; for in the long days of His being despised and rejected of men, He has never compromised with divine idealism or eternal truth. He, in contrast with all other rulers, has stood steadfast in righteousness, patiently waiting until His enemies should be made the footstool of His feet (Ps. 110: 1; Matt. 22: 44; Mark 12: 36; Heb. 10: 13) and until every knee should bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord (Phil. 2: 5–11). This then is the background of this twentieth chapter; and one day, as surely as God is God, it will be its bright and beautiful foreground. And the glory, which will then be Christ's, will, by His gracious gift, be also the portion of all those who have remained

steadfastly true to Him, and have chosen, humbly and lovingly to follow Him, in His lamblike character, wherever He has gone (14: 4; 20: 4, 6).

120

Criticism is sometimes expressed in respect to the thought of a possible millennial reign of Christ, especially as related to the almost universal soul-saving which prophetic students say will then take place. It is asked, must this world wait to be saved till Christ returns in person? Will He be more powerful when He is ruling at Jerusalem than He is now on the throne of heaven? Is He not able to do at present, through and by the Holy Spirit, all that He will be able to bring to pass by dwelling personally among men? These are questions, the asking of which is but reasonable and right, and, therefore, they call for an answer. And the answer is plainly and positively that Christ will not be able to do in the millennial age, in regenerating souls, any more than He is able to do in the present age, He having now all authority both in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28: 18–20; Mark 16: 14–20; Acts 1: 8). It needs to be added, however, in order to correct misunderstanding, that sane students of prophecy have never spoken otherwise than this. They have declared that the millennium, beyond anything the world has ever known, will be a time of soul-saving. But this statement has never been based upon the thought of change in the character or power of God. Their opinion has been founded simply upon the divine record and has been given without explanation of any kind. It has been recognized that God's ways never need apology or even explanation and it has been thought quite sufficient to say that the Scripture makes it clear that one work, in soul-saving, is done in this age, and another and greater one in

the age which is to come. For our satisfaction, we may reasonably conclude that, for some cause, men will more freely and universally accept Christ then than now. But we may be sure that the difference, as between the two times, is not in God but in men. In addition to this, the criticism referred to entirely misses the mark of the position held by prophetic students, by not recognizing the explanation which they do give of Christ's personal reign on earth. This, in substance, is as follows: First, it is just that Christ should be vindicated by kingship and enthronement in the world where formerly He was humiliated and crucified (Phil, 2: 5–11). Second, it is reasonable to expect that Christians, who have met the scorn and derision of the world, should be justified before that world by being manifested as Christ's followers and co-heirs (6: 9–11; 16: 4–7; 18: 20; 19: 1, 2; 20: 4–6; 2 Thess. 1: 3–10). Third, it is in the right and purpose of God to judge Israel and the nations through the person of Christ because of their crime in rejecting Him, and in doing this to bring many to repentance (1: 7; Ps. 2: 7–12; 34: 1–8; Zech. 12: 10–14; Matt. 21: 33–41; 25: 31–46; Luke 19: 11–27). Fourth, it is plainly the case, according to the Scripture, that God's grace is so great and comprehensive as to lead Him, in the face of the failure of men in the present age, to give them another and even more favorable opportunity of accepting His rule and government, bringing this to pass by the revelation of the person of Christ with power and great glory (1: 7; Zech. 12: 1–13; Matt. 24: 29–31; Mic. 4: 1–5). And lastly, it is Christ's prerogative to take glory unto Himself by fulfilling His ancient purpose toward Israel in exalting them among the nations and by thus bringing the nations throughout the world to acknowledge Him as King of kings and Lord of lords (17: 13, 14; 19: 11–16; Ps. 67: 1–7; Isa. 2: 1–4; 4: 2–6; 11: 1–10; 40: 1–11; 41: 8–16; 42: 1–9; 60: 1–

22; 61: 1–9; Ezek. 37: 1–28; Joel 2: 15–32; Zech. 10: 1–12; Mal. 3: 1–6; 4: 1–3; Luke 1: 31–33; Phil. 2: 5–11). As touching the truth of these last statements, the book of the Revelation gives ample confirmation. In every instance in the record, where the second advent is immediately in vision, the heavenly throng bursts forth in praise, and in every such case this adoration looks forward to the kingship of Christ, His judgment over the wicked, and His reign and rule, not only over but also actually on the earth. Some of these words of praise are as follows: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (5: 9, 10). "And there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (11: 15). "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth" (11: 16–19). "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints (nations). Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and

worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest" (15: 3, 4). "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand" (19: 1, 2). "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great" (19: 5). "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (19: 6, 7). It is always safe to side with the angels and other heavenly beings, for they have the mind of God; and here is a case where it appears that their thoughts are beyond misapprehension.

121

The tenth verse of the twentieth chapter brings us to the sixth judgment, namely, that of Satan and his fallen angels (see the Analysis); and, in doing so, it presents to us a great mystery. The Bible at large introduces us to many mysteries. But possibly none is greater than the one which finds expression in the person of Satan and God's dealings with him. We question, Why did God create the Devil? and, if he was at first sinless and then fell — which is the case (Isa. 14: 12–20) — and was doomed by his fall to merited judgment, why has not God dealt with him already as He will do by and by? and, why does God even at the end, mete out judgment upon

him in progressive stages and not at once and finally? These are indeed mysteries which remain hidden in the infinite and eternal counsels of Deity. But a mystery does not do away with the fact which lies behind it; nor does it cast even a shadow of doubt upon its reality and certainty. Indeed, scripturally speaking, a mystery makes sure the fact and confirms to us its authenticity, for it lifts thought and faith into the realm of the unseen and eternal, where verities are most veritable (2 Cor. 4: 17, 18). We may believe, therefore, that Almighty Wisdom has dealt with this personage of Satan, both in his origin and permitted activities, and that He will deal with him in his final destruction. In spite of what the chapter has to say of Satan, therefore, our faith need not waver, but may remain steadfast, even though we may not understand the divine methods or purposes as related to him. Moreover, we may be assured of this; that God's dealings with the Devil will make infinitely for His glory and for the good of the saints. And these are great ends to be conserved, even though it be at a great cost. Let us understand then, the chapter's teachings: Christ will bind Satan for a full thousand years (20: 1, 2); He will hold him fast in the abyss during the whole of His millennial reign (20: 1); when He releases him at the end of the millennium, it will be only for a "little season" (20: 3); and finally, He will put him beyond tempting the saints and defiling God's fair world by casting him into the lake of fire and brimstone (20: 10). This will be his final abiding place. There, the adversary of Christ (Matt. 4: 1–11) and the accuser of the brethren (12: 10) will be held captive throughout eternity, the personified evidence of the fact that the Nazarene has at last and forever conquered every foe (12: 9–12; Luke 10: 18; Phil. 2: 9–11).

122

The twelfth verse of the twentieth chapter introduces the scene of the judgment of the wicked dead (20: 12–15), which is the seventh and last one (see the Analysis). It is to be remembered that the Spirit specifically stated in a previous verse (20: 5) that there was a "first resurrection," which implied that there was to be a second one; that only those whom He could term "blessed and holy" had part in this resurrection (20: 6), which Christ called the "resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14) and the "resurrection of life" (John 5: 29), and that the "rest of the dead," namely, those who were not blessed and holy but the contrary, that is, the wicked, "lived not again" (in bodily form) "until the thousand years were finished" (20: 5), Christ calling this the "resurrection of damnation" (John 5: 29). It would be impossible for language to make facts clearer than this, so we may confidently assert that this seventh or last judgment is exclusively that of the unrighteous, and is, as the fourteenth verse states, not unto life but unto death, it being designated, "the second death" (20: 14; 21: 8). We may affirm, therefore, that the term, "the general judgment," is a misnomer, for there is no such event recorded in the Scripture. There is, as we see, a judgment of the "last day," as named by the Lord (John 12: 48) and as here described by John (20: 11–15). But this judgment is, as we have said, not general but special, being exclusively that of the wicked (20: 11, 12). A close study of the Word reveals the fact that the various judgments differ from one another in their time, place, persons judged, character and result. For instance, note the following: The judgment of the saints is previous to the millennium (20: 6–9; 21: 4), before the judgment seat of Christ in heaven (Rom. 14: 10; 2 Cor. 5: 10; 1

Thess. 4: 16, 17), of Christians only (Rom. 14: 10; 2 Cor. 5: 10) and as to service and for rewarding (1 Cor. 4: 1–5; Rev. 11: 18; 22: 12). The judgment of the nations is previous to and during the millennium (Matt. 25: 31–46; Rev. 19: 11–21; 20: 7–9), before Christ's throne of glory on earth (Matt. 25: 31) — national judgments, in the nature of the case, must be on earth where alone nations have place and standing — of governments and peoples, as to the divine law (Ps. 2: 8–12; Isa. 32: 1–20), and for life or death (Matt. 25: 46; Rev. 19: 19–21). And here in the record, the judgment of the wicked is at the end of the millennium (20: 7), before the throne of God in heaven (20: 11, 12), of individuals who are lost (20: 12–15), as to their works (20: 12, 13) and unto condemnation and eternal punishment (20: 14). The fact that "death" (the grave) and "Hades" (the then place of punishment in the center of the earth), give up their dead indicates that the souls of the wicked are here brought up from the underworld and their bodies raised from the grave (Dan. 12: 2; Acts 24: 15). In Old Testament times, the souls of the righteous went to a place of comfort and bliss in the underworld (1 Sam. 28: 15; Luke 16: 25), which was Paradise (Luke 23: 43); but they were taken from this location at the ascension of Christ and brought to heaven (Eph. 4: 8–10), which is now Paradise (2 Cor. 12: 1–4). The unrighteous, however, were left in a place of torment in the same underworld (Luke 16: 23–25); and this place has remained and will remain their prison house until they are brought up before the great white throne for final judgment (Luke 16: 9–31; Rev. 20: 14, 15). It is to be observed that the passage in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew (25: 31–46) does not refer to the last judgment, namely, the one described in this twentieth chapter of the Revelation (20: 11–15). That judgment is of the nations

(Matt. 25: 32), this is of individuals (20: 12, 13); that is before the millennium (19: 11; 20: 1, 2), this is after it (20: 7–15); that is concerning the treatment given in the days of the Antichrist to the King's brethren, namely, Jewish Christians (Matt. 25: 37–45), this is concerning works (20: 11–13); that is before the Son of man as King (Matt. 25: 31, 34, 40), this is before God, as the final and universal Judge (20: 11). It is to be kept in mind further, that the individuals before this last judgment are those who did not have part in the first resurrection (20: 5); that they are those who are under the power of the second death (20: 6); that they are called the "dead," in signification of the fact that they had died physically and were dead spiritually (20: 12, 13); that, though they are then both physically and spiritually dead, they are alive in spirit and are made to "stand" (in resurrection bodies) before the throne to be there judged; that hence, they had not become extinct, but are alive (20: 12); and finally, that no second chance is given to them, but all are condemned, and hence, are consigned to the lake of fire and brimstone (20: 14, 15).

123

The English word judgment, either in the singular or plural form, occurs in the Revelation some seven times (14: 7; 15: 4; 16: 7; 17: 1; 18: 10; 19: 2; 20: 4). There are three words in the Greek, however, in these various places where the one English word is found. The majority of these words are either *krisis* or *krima*. The first of these words (*krisis*) means a decision, and, by extension, a tribunal; and the second (*krima*) means a decision, and, by extension, a pronounced judgment. It is clear from the definitions given that neither of the words indicates the kind of tribunal established, the process of enquiry,

or the sort of judgment pronounced. And the use made of the words in the New Testament at large emphasizes this indefiniteness, that is, it indicates that the words may signify judgment, either, on the one hand, of blessing and rewarding (Rom. 14: 10; 2 Cor. 5: 10; 1 John 4: 17; Rev. 14: 7), or, on the other, of condemnation and punishment (Rom. 2: 3; 5: 6, 18; 2 Thess. 1: 15; Heb. 10: 27; 2 Pet. 2: 3, 4, 9; 3: 7; Jude 6, 15; Rev. 16: 7; 17: 1; 18: 10; 19: 2). In other words, the central idea of the two words is that of securing, through judgment, absolute justice, whether it be for approbation or condemnation. What will be done, then, in the day of judgment is this: God, as has never occurred in earthly and human courts, will bring out the right of the case, according to His perfect knowledge of it. The good and the evil will be unitedly before Him. Hence, He will make all necessary allowances, give every known credit, and grant all possible rewarding; or He will impose the required degree of penalty and punishment. The prominent factor of future divine judgment, therefore, will be its righteousness (Ps. 45: 7; 48: 10; 72: 2; 96: 13; Heb. 1: 8; Rev. 19: 11). This, manifestly, will imply the acceptance of some persons and the rejection of others, which will produce not only the two classes of saved and unsaved (Matt. 25: 46), but also varying degrees of treatment, within the one class and the other, according to each man's deserts (Matt. 10: 15; 11: 22, 24; Mark 6: 11; Luke 10: 12, 14). The choice which men may and must make in preparation for God's judgment is, objectively, between grace and law, and, subjectively, between faith and works. And the Word makes it plain, on account of sin, that the only hope of salvation which a man may have is in grace and faith (Rom. 3: 24; 4: 5, 16; 9: 30; Eph. 1: 7; 2: 5; Heb. 11: 6). To attempt to be saved by law and works, on account of broken law and

incompleted works, is to condemn oneself completely, the divine sentence at the throne legally and openly confirming what the man himself, by his choice, has brought to pass (Rom. 3: 27; 4: 2, 5, 6, 15; 9: 11; 11: 6; Gal. 2: 16; 3: 10; Eph. 2: 9; 1 Tim. 1:9). It is this latter class of persons, namely, the lost, who are in this last judgment, before the "great white throne" (20: 11). These are they who have rejected grace and faith (21: 8) and who have appealed to law and works (20: 12, 13). In spite, therefore, of divine love, compassion, consideration, and allowance, and all because of absolute justice, they are utterly and forever condemned and so cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (20: 15). This much is plain and we may see thus far. But here, in the revelation, God mercifully hangs before our eyes — except for one more brief vision (21: 8) — the veil of undiscoverable knowledge. And where He has placed it, we leave it (Deut. 29: 29).

124

The twenty-first chapter begins a new period, which is the seventh and last, and is that of the seven new things (see the Analysis). There is no introduction to this period, the Spirit proceeding at once to His description of it. In this section, the time element gradually ceases, merging into and finally becoming absorbed in that of eternity. It is to be observed, however, that the eternal conditions are placed first (21: 1–8) and the temporal second (21: 9–27; 22: 1–5). This inversion of order is according to a common law of arrangement in the Revelation, the heavenly and unlimited things being shown before the earthly and limited. Thus it was in the first chapter (1: 9–20); and again in the seventh (7: 9–17); and again in the twelfth (12: 1–5); and again in the nineteenth (19:

6–9), all of these passages, while chronologically placed, being heavenly in character and facing toward eternity. Here, therefore, we meet with a heavenly scene and an eternal one (21: 1–7), the outlook being toward a new heaven (21: 1), a new earth (21: 1), a new city (21: 2), a new tabernacle (21: 3), a new fellowship (21: 3), a new experience (21: 4), and a new prospect (21: 5–8). All of these conditions follow the statements in the twentieth and twenty-first chapters to the effect that the present earth and heaven — there are four heavenly and earthly creations (20: 11; 21: 1) recorded in Scripture, the first mentioned in Genesis (Gen. 1: 1), the second in Genesis (Gen. 1: 6–10), the third in Revelation (20: 11), and the fourth in Revelation (21: 1) — flee away from the face of God, there being found thereafter no place for them (20: 11). This transmutation and transfiguration were foreseen by Isaiah (Isa. 65: 17; 66: 22). But, judging by the context, the prophet's view was more upon the changes which will take place at the beginning of the millennium (Isa. 35: 1–10) than at the end of it (21: 1), though here we may have a case of double fulfillment. However this may be, a new heaven and earth, after the white throne judgment, take the place of the old, the new earth becoming the abiding place of the redeemed throughout eternity (22: 5). And it will be in this new environment and under these new conditions that God will undertake to make "all things new" (21: 5). The meaning of this last phrase, in outstretch, creative production, splendor of achievement and glory of result, no mortal mind can now conceive. All that we may know is that God will be the creator, that we shall be workers together with Him, that the conditions and results will be soul satisfying, and that the experience will be both timeless and measureless.

125

There are two distinct visions in the twenty-first chapter. The first is that of the "new Jerusalem," with all that it contains (21: 1–5); and the second, of the "holy Jerusalem," with all that it contains (21: 10–27; 22: 1–5). These two visions concern the same city. For the "new Jerusalem" (21: 2) is also called the "holy city" (21: 2), though it is to be noted that the "holy Jerusalem" (21: 10) is not called the new Jerusalem. These statements imply that there is a connection between the two descriptions of the city though the distinction mentioned suggests that there is not a full identification. And the distinction is this: the first description gives to us a vision of the city in its heavenly and eternal aspect, connected with the new heaven and earth, when the "former things," such as death, sorrow, crying and pain, have passed away (21: 4); while the second description presents to us a vision of the city in its earthly and temporal aspect, connected with the present heaven and earth, when the "former things," as enumerated, are still in existence. In other words, the first vision is of the city in its unending state, as the abiding place of the redeemed for all eternity; and the second vision is of the same city in its millennial state, as the abiding place of the redeemed for the one thousand years. That these differences are not imaginative but actual, may be proved as follows: in connection with the first city, there is no more sea (21: 1); in connection with the second, there is a river, and, therefore, a sea, since all rivers flow into a sea (22: 1, 2); in connection with the first city there is no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain (21: 4); in connection with the second, there is each of these, for there is disease (22: 2); in connection with the first city, there is no physical healing, the saints

being in resurrection bodies (20: 5, 6; 21: 4); in connection with the second, there is physical healing and by common remedial means, the leaves of the tree being for the healing of the nations (22: 2); in connection with the first city, there is no food, since resurrection bodies do not require such (20: 5, 6; 21: 2); in connection with the second, there is food, since the tree of life bears twelve manner of fruits, for, of course, the purpose of physical sustenance by eating (22: 2); and finally, in connection with the first city there is no suggestion of national life, the former things having passed away (21: 4); and in connection with the second, there is such life, the nations bringing their glory into Jerusalem (Zech. 14: 16–19; 21: 24–26). These are distinctions of a radical kind, and they confirm the thought which has been expressed, namely, that the twenty-first chapter contains two distinct visions, one heavenly and eternal, and the other earthly and temporal; one connected with the new heaven and earth, and the other, with the present one; one belonging to the perpetual and perfected state, and the other, to the millennial and unperfected; and the first envisaging the new and permanent, and the second, the old and temporary. But, once more, the two visions of the one city are connected, the one finally merging into the other, for the "holy Jerusalem" of the millennium becomes, at the end of that time, the "new Jerusalem" of eternity (22: 3–5).

126

The Spirit, having given in the early portion of the twenty-first chapter the vision of the new Jerusalem (21: 1–7) and having added to this, in sharp and awful contrast, that of the lake of fire (21: 8), proceeds, from the ninth verse onward, to present a large and detailed view

of the "holy Jerusalem," that is, the city of the millennial time and condition (21: 9–21; 22: 1–5). This view had been hinted at in the twentieth chapter — where the thousand-year rule of Christ and the saints is specifically spoken of (20: 4–6) — by setting forth the fact that the "beloved city," namely, Jerusalem, was to be so glorious during the millennial period as to excite the cupidity of Satan and the nations (20: 7–9). But all details of the city were then withheld; and this, manifestly, is the reason why they are now given. It is thus that we come, at the ninth verse (21: 9), to a new experience on the part of John, the Spirit granting to him the privilege of beholding the consummation of God's promises and purposes as these are related to this present earthly order of things (21: 9). As to the divine promises, these had been clearly set forth. Jehovah had definitely and unconditionally offered to Abraham, and thus to his seed, a city which should come from heaven to earth, be located in the land of promise and be his and his people's home. It was, amongst other reasons, because such an earthly prospect was in view that Abraham was willing to leave the magnificent and enticing Ur of the Chaldees, go forth to a foreign land, be a stranger and pilgrim there and pass through the long discomfort of living in a tent. These statements seem to be made clear and certain by the manifest fact that the patriarch, if he had thought that the city would not be brought from heaven to earth, would have preferred, so far as comfort is concerned, to stay in Ur and go to his heavenly dwelling place, not from a tent, but from that city. They also seem to be made clear and certain by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, where he speaks as follows: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing

whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: *for* he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11: 8–10). As to the divine purposes, these had been partly made plain in the Old Testament and now are made plainer in this portion of the New. The prophet Zechariah had foretold that Jerusalem, in the last days, would be surrounded by all of the nations; that it would be taken; that the houses would be rifled; that the women would be ravished; that half of the city would go forth into captivity and that the residue of the people would not be cut off from the city (Zech. 14: 1, 2). He had further prophesied that the Lord would go forth and fight against those nations; that His feet would stand upon the Mount of Olives; that the Lord His God would come and all the saints with Him; that in that day living waters would go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea (the Dead Sea) and half of them toward the hinder sea (the Mediterranean); that the Lord would be King over all the earth; and that in that day there would be one Lord and His name one (Zech. 14: 3–9). He had then set forth the fact that the city of Jerusalem would be the dwelling place of the King, the Lord of hosts; that the nations would come up from year to year to worship Him; that those nations which did not so come would be punished; and that everything in Jerusalem in that day would be holy unto the Lord (Zech. 14: 16–21). And now John gives much the same, and yet a more amplified description of Jerusalem. He declares that the city will descend out of heaven from God, which means that it will descend from heaven to earth; that the nations will walk in the light of it; that the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor into

it; that the nations also will bring their glory and honor into it; and that nothing will enter into it that defileth, that worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life (21: 9, 10, 24–27). He also declares that a pure river of water will proceed from the throne of God and of the Lamb; that in the midst of the street of it and on either side of the river there will be a tree (or, wood, grove) of life; that the tree will bear twelve manner of fruits and will yield her fruit every month; and that the leaves of the tree will be for the healing of the nations (22: 1, 2). And finally, he describes the construction of the city, telling of the magnificence of its walls, its gates, its foundations, its light and its glory, all in language which transcends human thought and imagination (21: 10–23). This then, is the city which God had promised to faithful Abraham and his faithful seed, it being the city which has foundations — that is, is stable and unshakable — and whose builder and maker is God — that is, is glorious beyond compare (Heb. 11: 10). This also, is the city which God will yet place in Palestine, at Jerusalem, for the space of a thousand years, and which will be to the praise of His glory throughout the whole earth (Isa. 62: 1–12). This city Abraham, in the days of his flesh, was not permitted to see. But he and his spiritual seed, in resurrection form and state, will both see and inherit it, during the thousand years; and his natural seed, in bodies of flesh and blood, will have the same experience, through the same space of time. Afterwards, it will be the dwelling place of each and all of the saints throughout the long aeons of eternity.

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Over against the picture of the city of God (21: 1–7), the Spirit sets forth that of the "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (21: 8). If we shrink to pass from the one to the other, we may know that God did, for His compassions and sorrows are infinitely beyond our own. And yet He did what He did. It must have been then, that He was constrained to add the one vision to the other for the sake of truth, and in order that He might give solemn, and, if possible, saving warning of the danger which confronts sinful and impenitent men. If there is one thing beyond another which commends the Bible as the book of God, it is this fact that, from first to last and at whatever cost, it is resolutely and uncompromisingly honest. And here is a notable example of this. How soothing to our souls it would have been, especially after picturing the city of light and love, if the Holy Spirit had remained silent concerning any abiding place of another kind; and how in pity — we speak from a natural standpoint — He must have longed to have it so. But openly and frankly, He lifts the veil which hangs over the abyss and shows us its unrelieved darkness and suffering. And it is a startling sight that He gives us of the persons who are in that place of punishment. According to our estimate of things, we can have some understanding of the fact that the "abominable" and "murderers" and "whoremongers" will be there. But we shrink from placing besides these, "idolaters" and "sorcerers" and "liars." And as for God decreeing that the "fearful" and "unbelieving" should spend an eternity in the company of those who are incorrigibly wicked and loathsomely vile, our spirits start back from the thought with horror. But it is evident that God does not look upon sin as we

do. To Him, sin, as such, is punishable, whether, for instance, it is the sin of unbelief or that of murder. And sin of any kind must be atoned for through the meritorious sacrifice of Christ and be pardoned through faith in Him, if the wrath of God is not to fall upon it, and thus upon the sinner (Rom. 3: 21–26; 5: 1, 2; 2 Cor. 5: 21). We see then, that sin of the minor sort is as damaging to the soul, so far as separation from God is concerned, as that of the major (Rom. 1: 18; 2: 9; 3: 10–20; 2 Thess. 1: 7–9; Jude 15). This does not mean that all sin and sinners will be punished alike, for God is infinitely just even in the exhibition of wrath and will dispense punishment according to each one's deserving. But, as we see here, there is only one abiding place for those who are not within the city of God; it is outside of that city (21: 27; 22: 15) and in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone (20: 15; 21: 8).

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Verse five of the twenty-second chapter is the last of a series of verses in the Revelation which contain either the Greek noun *aiōn* or the adjective *aiōnios*. The second word (*aiōnios*) is used only once in the Revelation (14: 6), where it is translated "everlasting" in the Authorized Version, and "eternal" in the Revised. The first word (*aiōn*) is used in fourteen places (1: 6, 8; 4: 9, 10; 5: 13, 14; 7: 12; 10: 6; 11: 15; 14: 11; 15: 7; 19: 3; 20: 10; 22:5), and, with one exception (1: 18), the phrase in which it occurs is always translated "forever and ever," both in the Authorized Version and Revised. The latter word (*aiōn*), in the fourteen passages mentioned, is always duplicated, the full Greek phrase being, *eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn* — there are no articles in 14: 11 — which signifies, to the aeons of the aeons. In reviewing the fifteen

passages, it is seen that they refer to different, and, in some cases, entirely opposite things or persons. In one case, the gospel is in mind (14: 6). In ten cases, God or Christ is in vision (1: 6, 18; 4: 9, 10; 5: 13, 14; 7: 12; 10: 6; 11: 15; 15: 7). In one case, the saints are in sight (22: 5). And in three cases, the wicked are in view (14: 11; 19: 3; 20: 10). Thus it appears that the words *aiōn* and *aiōnios* do not, in themselves, suggest the thought either of goodness or badness, they being used in both connections. Thus also, it appears that whatever the phrase means in one case, it must mean in other cases, it being inconceivable that the Holy Spirit would use it in the same book with one thought in mind in some connections and a different one in others. Since, therefore, it is manifest that the words in some of the passages, such as those which refer to God, express infinite time, we may conclude that they do in all of them, inclusive of those which refer to the gospel, the saints and the wicked. For instance, the adoration and praise given to God and Christ (1: 6; 4: 10; 5: 13, 14; 7: 12) are ceaseless, and also, the existence and reign of God and Christ (1: 18; 4: 9, 10; 5: 14; 10: 6; 15: 7) are unending. But it is to be remembered that the phrase which the Holy Spirit uses to express, in these connections, infinitude of time, is the one already mentioned. We conclude, therefore, that the phrase, as connected with both the saints and wicked, presents the same thought of unendingness. We do not mean by the above that the words *aiōn* and *aiōnios* never predicate limited time, for a statement to this effect would be far from true (Matt. 13: 39, 40, 49; 28: 20; Gal. 1: 4; Eph. 6: 12; 2 Tim. 4: 10; Titus 2: 12; see Greek). We are referring to the combination of words mentioned (*eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*), and as found in the book of the Revelation. In referring to the inherent meaning of the words *aiōn* and *aiōnios,* the

definition of Aristotle (De Caelo, lib. 1, cap. 9) is to be kept in mind. This is to the effect that the two words signify ever-existing, that is, time-infinitude. This, scripturally speaking, is the longest possible period of time which can be conceived of in connection with the subject which is in view. In a temporal matter, therefore — such as a given age — it is from the utmost of its beginning to the utmost of its ending. And in an eternal matter — such as the life of God — it is again from the utmost of its beginning to the utmost of its ending. In the case of God's life, manifestly, it is a beginning which has no beginning and an ending which has no ending, that is, it is eternity. It follows from this, be it noted, that the Revelation phrase, *eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn,* is not to be translated, as is so often done, by the words, " to the ages of the ages," as if each aeon were limited in duration; but rather to the eternities of the eternities, each aeon being unlimited. In other words, the phrase here in the Revelation presents the thought of eternity in a greatly intensified form, just as in the case of the English phrase, " forever and ever," where one " ever " expresses eternity, yet another is added to it, in order to emphasize the fact that eternity is to be thought of as infinitely unending in duration.

129

The sixth verse of the twenty-second chapter begins the general conclusion; (see the Analysis). This portion of Scripture has much the same relationship to the Revelation as the general introduction has (1: 1–8), that is, it is related to the whole book (22: 6–21). There is, however, a distinct difference: the introduction prepares the way for the long revelation which is to follow; and the conclusion gathers up the details of that revelation, em-

phasizes its important statements and gives prophecy a practical application by making it pressingly personal. This last is accomplished in various ways: first, there are the conclusion's explanations (22: 6, 16); second, there are its exhortations (22: 7–12; 17–19); third, there are its promises (22: 7, 12, 16, 20); fourth, there is its prayer (22: 20); and fifth and last, there is its benediction (22: 21). The personal element is inclusive of the apostle John, who, in the rapidly changing and overwhelmingly large visions of the prophetical portion, has been almost lost to sight since the introduction of the first chapter (1: 1, 4, 9), but is now suddenly brought into view as the one to whom the revelation is first given, and the one, therefore, who is first affected by it (22: 8–10, 20). Hence, the movement of the whole book is from Patmos to Patmos and from John to John. But this, clearly, is representative. That is, it is, as related to us, from our habitation back to our habitation, and from ourselves back to ourselves. And God would have it so, in reality and practically (1: 1, 4; 22: 16). This book of the Revelation is not to be understood through private interpretation and its blessings are not to be possessed as a private inheritance. John's Patmos is ours, wherever we may be; and John is ourselves, whoever we may be. This illuminating and searching conclusion, therefore, is for us, that we may look up, uncover our ears, listen to the Voice, prepare our hearts to be and do, and then, watch, wait and work, even as John, the beloved disciple did (1: 10–20; 22: 8, 16, 17, 20, 21).

130

It is always an act of infinite condescension on the part of God, as occurs here in the sixth verse, to say that His utterances are "faithful and true" (22: 6). Jesus did

this, during His life on earth, again and again, in the use of the Jewish court formula, "Verily, verily," or — as it is in the Greek — "Amen, amen" (John 1: 51; 3: 3; 5: 11; 5: 19, 24, 25; 6: 26, 32, 47, 53; 8: 34, 51, 58; 10: 1, 7; 12: 24; 13: 16, 20, 21, 38; 14: 12; 16: 20, 23; 21: 18). And the motive, on the part of God and Christ, is the same. In each case, it is indeed, an act of infinite condescension, and it is intended that it should be understood as such. But, being this, it is also an act of infinite assurance, wherein God designs to satisfy our souls, and thus put all possible doubts to rest. Just here (22: 6), He knows that there is special need of faith being strengthened. He has spoken, not of sinful man's spiritual evolution, but devolution (20: 7–9); not of his following the Christ, but the Antichrist (13: 4–8); not of meriting a heavenly throne and crown, but judgment and punishment (19: 19–21; 20: 12–15); not of unending enjoyment with Himself, but of eternal suffering in separation from Himself (21: 8, 27). These are not comfortable and comforting thoughts for us to have, even though we understand that the application is related to others than ourselves. It is no small wonder, therefore, that our hopeful minds and ever-imaginative spirits recoil from the man-dishonoring truth thus forced upon us, and that we are tempted to disbelieve what God would have us believe. In other words, we meet here the radical difference, spiritually speaking, between evolution and revelation. The one is man's doctrine and makes for the natural man's exaltation; the other is God's doctrine and makes for the natural man's debasement; and it does not take the natural man long to decide which of the two he prefers and chooses. As to the natural man, whether he be called philosopher, psychologist, biologist, or, just scientist, he is incurable, since he rejects inspiration and revelation and cleaves to reason and discovery. The more

humble-minded saint, however, is not so. He welcomes all scientific truth. But in doing so, he sets the Holy God and the Holy Word above all men's interpretation of truth, even in the world of nature. And it is to this saint that the Lord draws near, with His quieting word of assurance, graciously affirming that His revelation, in spite of all the things in it which are hard to be understood, is absolutely and unalterably "faithful and true" (22: 6). In chapter nineteen, Christ had been designated as the "Faithful and True" (19: 11). And now this same title is given to His sayings (19: 9; 21: 5; 22: 6). Thus, God would have us understand that the One and the other are inseparably identified (19: 13), and that each is impregnable and imperishable (Heb. 13: 8; Matt. 24: 35; Rev. 19: 16; 2 Cor. 13: 8).

131

God has no cure for the social evils of this present age; not in philosophy, nor in science, nor in socialism, nor in altruism, nor in Christianity, nor even in Christ Himself. These evils may be ameliorated, especially by Christianity and Christ. The cure, however, does not pertain to this age, but rather, to the one which is to come (Ps. 72: 1–19; Isa. 32: 1–18). In the present dispensation, God is dealing with individual and church life, and thus it is only in comparative measure that He undertakes for the community, the nation and the nations. This, most persons will judge, is bald and bold pessimism. The question, however, is not as to pessimism, any more than optimism; it is only as to what is the Scripture, and, therefore, the truth. In regard to this, it is to be observed that God has different purposes in different dispensations; that these purposes are formed and fulfilled in view of what He foreknows men will or will not do with His dear Son; and

hence, that His forward movements, dispensation upon dispensation, are according to what He foresees in man, and according to the divine plan and program which accordingly He formulates. As to the present age, He purposes to work, and that gloriously, in the salvation of individuals and in the building up of the body of Christ (Acts 15: 14; Eph. 2: 1–22); and it is plainly true that He designs that the effect of these purposes upon men at large will be both to restrain them from a measure of evil and constrain them to a measure of good (1 Tim. 2: 1–4). At the same time, He clearly states that the end of His present working will not be the salvation of all and thus for the eradication of evil (2 Tim. 3: 1–5; 2 Pet. 3: 1–14). On the contrary, He prophesies that the general course of events will be toward a departure from Himself and His laws and an ultimate choice of the Antichrist and his satanic ways (2 Thess. 2: 1–12; Rev. 13: 1–9; 19: 17–21). This is the reason why this book of the Revelation ends as it does, not in a gradual development amongst men of spiritual goodness, but in a gradual heading up of spiritual evil, until Christ has come in order to judge and destroy (2 Thess. 2: 6–12; Rev. 19: 11–21). And this also is the reason why the closing emphasis of the book is not upon the conquests of the church, but upon the coming and appearing of Christ (22: 7, 12, 20). While then, it is well for men to give themselves to the righting of life's wrongs (Gal. 6: 10; 1 Tim. 2: 1–4), it is better for them to take that course which will most largely result in turning people from impending wrath and in preparing them for a new and more righteous experience in the age and world to come (Matt. 28: 18–20; Mark 16: 14–20; Rom. 1: 11–18; Rev. 14: 6–13; 20: 4; 21: 1–5). The advent of Christ, therefore, is the great objective set before the church and the world, before the one as an inspiration and

before the other as a warning; and, manifestly, it is toward this event that the whole prophecy of the Revelation has faced and its events have moved (1: 7, 8; 19: 11–16). All this, as evidenced by the conclusion which we are considering, seems to be the very mind of Christ; for in this twenty-second chapter the Lord twice over cries out, "Behold, I come quickly" (22: 7, 12), and once, "Surely, I come quickly" (22: 20). As for pessimism and optimism, it may be remarked that the man who is most a pessimist, however optimistic his spirit, is the one who seeks to force a spiritual issue which is apart from the revealed will of God; and that the man who is most an optimist, however pessimistic his view may seem, is the man who seeks to conform his spiritual life and service wholly and forever to that will.

132

It is a sad commentary upon our human nature that Christians have generally regarded the book most sealed which is the only one which God has commanded should not be sealed (22: 10). When Daniel had completed the record of his visions, God directed him to close up and seal his prophecies "till the time of the end" (Dan. 12: 4, 9). But it is to be kept in mind that John, when he wrote, was living in the end-time to which Daniel had referred (1 Cor. 10: 11), and was describing visions which were to illuminate and irradiate those which Daniel had portrayed. It was not God's purpose, therefore, that these latter visions should be closed and sealed as the former ones had been. On the contrary, He designed that this scroll of the Revelation should be opened and unrolled, its contents read and understood, and its many and great lessons be learned and lived out. This was emphasized at

the beginning of the book, in its introduction (1: 3). And it is now reëmphasized here at its close, in its conclusion (22: 7, 10, 16). This does not mean that the Revelation, as a whole, is easy to be understood, or that it may ever wholly be comprehended until we are at Jesus' feet and know as we are known (1 Cor. 8: 2; 13: 9–12). But also, it does not mean that it is altogether incomprehensible, and that it must be set aside until Christ comes and is Himself our teacher. Here is a case where amidst darkness, there is light; and amidst matters which we may not know, there are others which we may and should. Besides this, it is ever to be remembered that the chief revelation of this Revelation is, not the understanding, for instance, of the meaning of the seals, trumpets, thunders, earthquakes, locusts and other divine accessories of judgment, but rather, the perception of the person, character, work, coming and conquest of Christ, having which, one has almost everything and missing which, one has almost nothing (1: 1, 4–18; 19: 10–16). Moreover, we may find peculiar encouragement in meditating upon this portion of Holy Writ from the fact that God said to Daniel that, at the end-time, the wise should understand (Dan. 12: 4, 8–10); and from the added fact that time, since Daniel and John wrote, has far advanced and has brought us to what, undoubtedly, is the end of the end-time. Thus we may believe that the word of the Lord, in the conclusion before us, has for us a new meaning and application. When, therefore, we hear Christ say, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand" (22: 10), we may understand that His word is peculiarly for ourselves, and thus, we may take heart and believe that we shall understand. But it is to be observed that the person who will perceive will be the one who, like John, will confess himself to be a bond-slave of

Christ (1: 1); who will not only read, but also keep the sayings of the book (1: 3); and who will obtain his interpretation as John did his revelation, namely, in and through the Holy Spirit (1: 10). If ever there was a place where the solemn words of our Lord were applicable, it is certainly to be found in the studying of this portion of the Scripture: "Take heed, therefore, how ye hear; for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have" (Luke 8: 18).

133

There is no place in the Word of God, where the soul-saving passion of Christ comes out more clearly than in this closing chapter of the Revelation. Foreseeing that the book would be placed last in the arrangement of the Scriptures, He evidently determined, on the last page and through His last words, to make a final and infinitely forceful appeal to the church to evangelize the world and to the world to be reconciled to Himself. Through eleven verses, therefore, the risen and glorified Lord speaks to His people and to those who are not His people (22: 10–20). And He takes a distinctly evangelistic method in order to bring this to pass. First, He sets forth the danger of continuing in sin, pointing out the tendency of sin to produce fixity of conditions and warning souls that the time is at hand when judgment will infinitely and eternally separate between the wicked and the godly (22: 10, 11). Second, He incites to righteousness by promising rewards to those who live righteously (22: 12–14). Third, He makes it clear to all who may hear His voice that the coming age and world will not be one of haphazard and inconsequential arrangement, but the contrary, and hence,

that the great and aeon-continuing city of God would have distinct definements, that it would have its walls and gates, that thus, there would be an inside and an outside, and that those who would be within would be blessed and those without cursed (22: 14–15). Fourth, He sets before His church the glorious and constraining hope of His coming, declaring Himself to be both the root — the progenitor — and the offspring — the successor — of David, and likening Himself to the bright and morning star, which promises and ushers in the day (22: 16). Fifth, He declares — as judged by the context — that it is the office work of the Spirit and the bride to say, Come, not here as later addressing the cry to Christ, but rather, to a sinful world; He beseeches that every one who hears and accepts that Come, may take up the word and himself cry, Come; He himself pleads with the sinner who has drunk at broken cisterns and is still athirst, to come; and finally, like the very Christ of Judea and Galilee but now from heaven's throne, He sends forth one more and final "whosoever," bidding all who are athirst to come (22: 17). Sixth, He then gives solemn utterance to the place in His thought which this Revelation has, warning any and all persons, high or low, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, that subtraction from the words of this prophecy will merit and obtain heavy punishment from God (22: 19). And finally, as a last, intimate, precious word of love and encouragement, He reiterates His old time and oft repeated promise to come again, and that in speed (22: 20). So it is that this One who is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, presents Himself to our view, high and lifted up as Son of God, but lowly and compassionate as Son of man, His hands outstretched, His voice vibrant with love's pleading, using

every device known to Deity to win saints and sinners, and wishing to be remembered to earth's end as the One who is ever calling, Come! What a vision it is! There is not a weary soul anywhere in earth's vast domain which could wish for more or better.

134

The cry of John to Christ, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (22: 20), is the only prayer recorded in the Revelation and the last one recorded in the Bible. This is deeply significant. There are many prayers, as we should think, which John might aptly have breathed as a last petition in closing his great record. For instance, he might have pleaded for the righting of earth's wrongs; or the amelioration of men's ills; or, certainly, for the salvation of souls and the building up of the body of Christ. But he passed by the expression of all such thoughts and concentrated them upon that event which he knew, according to what the Spirit had taught him, would bring most speedily, largely and permanently to pass the many and great desires of his heart. For, evidently, John realized, as a result of the apocalyptic visions, that what had been true in Old Testament times, was again true in New Testament ones, namely, that, by God's decree, earth's final and full blessings had been connected with and made dependent upon the person and presence of Him who is Son of man and Son of God. Moreover, Christ had but then reëmphasized this truth, for His last word had been, not of church, or state or international League, but only of Himself and His appearing. John, therefore, had but one thought. Face to face with the wicked injustice of his own imprisonment, the sufferings of the church, the blight-

ing unrighteousness of heathen Rome, and the unutterable woes of a world, he put his hope in Christ, in His advent to earth, and in His rule of righteousness over the nations of the earth. When then, Christ cried to his waiting soul, "Surely, I come quickly," at once and eagerly he answered, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (22: 20). And the word is recorded for our sakes. The days of earthly pilgrimage for the church have, since then, been many, and, at times, rough and hard and steep. But God would have us understand that the Voice which reached John in Patmos still sounds, and that its promise still prevails. It is for us, therefore, to have our hope where John had his, and to cry as he cried. And as surely as God is God and His word is yea and amen in Christ, so surely, some day, will the Coming One come. Till that day dawns, it is for us to watch, to wait and to work.

135

We have heard many strange and startling voices as we have passed through the dark valleys of the Revelation's imagery; voices of trumpets breathing out judgments; of angels crying, Woe; of the wicked blaspheming the Holy Name; and of men's groans as they have perished under judgment strokes and amidst judgment fires. But, while God desired us to hear what He hears, in order that we may have compassion, in some measure, as He has compassion, these are not the last voices which He would have reach us. We are not of the night, but of the day; we have not been appointed to wrath, but to salvation; yea, we are those who are to live together with Christ, in beatific vision and in rapturous service, in the world which knows no sorrow and where all things will be made new (1 Thess. 5: 1–10; Rev. 21: 1–5). One last word,

therefore, Christ has for us, ere He closes the record of the scroll. It is spoken to us with the tenderness of a word of parting and it is given that it may sustain our weary hands and feeble footsteps "till He come." The word is a benediction, and it is this:

"The grace of the Lord Jesus
be with *you* all!"

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